Rational Political Order Through Dialectical Thought: The Kallipolis in Plato's Republic

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The *Kallipolis* in Plato's *Republic*

ABSTRACT

Recent Platonic scholarship has to a great extent denied the notion of the Kallipolis as described in the Republic. Alternately, the Kallipolis has been pictured as a class bound totalitarian state, and as a theoretical ideal that cannot be realized in practice. This thesis, however, attempts to demonstrate that Plato's proposals when viewed in the right historical context are not only untotalitarian, but also a great source for libertarian ideals. Moreover, an examination of Plato's early and middle dialectic clearly shows a conscious and deliberate attempt for the eventual implementation of the Kallipolis. The dialectic not only teaches correct knowledge, but also correct action and activity in the dispensing of the required knowledge that would enable the philosopher-Ruler to govern justly over the affairs of the commonwealth. Plato's dialectic is an ontologically grounded principle, just as it is an epistemological one. As such, correct political action is both the product and the vehicle of dialectical knowledge that is being derived from a most exacting and comprehensive theory of education.

PRÉCIS

Maintes études sur Platon ont récemment nié le concept de Kallipolis tel qu' il est exposé dans la République. On a interpreté cette Kallipolis comme s' il s' agissont d' un état totalitaire ou bien d' une théorie qui ne pourrait jamais être réalizée. Cette thèse, au contraire, essaye de démontrer que les idées de Platon (si on les interprète dans leur contexte historique) ne sont pas seulement anti-totalitaires, mais sont aussi une source d' ideaux libértaires. Encore, un examen de la dialéctique Platonicienne dans la première et deuxième phase montre qu' il-y-a là un essai décidé et conscient de réalizer l' idée de la Kallipolis. Cette dialéctique nous enseigne soit les connaissances soit les méthodes d' action qui pourraient mettre le Roi-Philosophe en état de gouverner la chose publique. La dialéctique de Platon a sa fondation ontologique aussi bien que épistémologique. L' action politique est ainsi au même temps le produit et le moyen du savoir dialéctique qui dérive, pour sa part, d' une théorie de l' éducation qui est aussi stricte que compréhensive.

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PREFACE

Since the end of the Second World War, or more precisely, since the publication of Sir Karl Popper's The Open Society and its Enemies (1945), Platonic scholarship has experienced an intense revival. (Harold Cherniss accumulated a bibliography of 2025 items from 1950-7, and R. D. Makiraham similarly collected 4620 books and articles from 1958-73). However, despite this popularity, the Platonic conception of the Kallipolis (best, fair, ideal polis) has been generally denied; or, in other terms, commentators have commented in such a manner that if Plato were alive today (it is my contention), he would not recognize the ideal commonwealth he described in the Republic. Interpretations that deny Plato's scheme fall into two distinct camps. In one, belong the commentators who claim that the Kallipolis is in fact a despotic state, and that Plato was a promoter of racialism and totalitarianism. In the other camp, belong the commentators who have attempted to minimize Plato's practical political thought in the Republic. As such, they argue that the Kallipolis is merely a theoretical ideal that cannot be realized in practice, since it is a pattern (paradigm) set up in heaven (592b).

On the other hand, however, I shall argue that Plato's proposals are not only untotalitarian when viewed in the right historical context, but also, and in fact, are fully realizable in the everyday affairs of the "one true state" — the Kallipolis. The Republic expounds a social, political, and educational theory, so closely intermingled that it is one theory which can be unlocked with a careful analysis of Plato's dialectic.

The pursuit (intellectual ascent) upwards to the final Idea or Form of the Agathon (Good) is revealed through dialectical knowledge. Such a journey of the mind, however, is not merely logical in character, but also

both identifies reality, and shows how this awareness of the Agathon at the disposal of the philosopher-Ruler can be profitably utilized in the practical everyday affairs of the polis. In other words, Plato's dialectic not only teaches correct knowledge, but also correct action and activity in the dispensing of this gathered knowledge. The dialectic is, therefore, an ontologically grounded principle — a principle of Being, just as it is an epistemological one. Plato is adamantly clear about this: "Dialectic is the knowledge of Being (reality) and Intelligibility (Republic 511c)." In this sense, the process of dialectical reasoning and activity formulates the rational organization of the Kallipolis. Hence, in the eyes of Plato, correct political action is both the product and the vehicle of dialectical knowledge that is being derived from a most exacting and comprehensive theory of education.

And while this notion — that dialectical reasoning can elucidate, and indeed, guide a philosopher-Ruler in resolving the problems of political conduct — is expounded by Cornford, Copleston and Gouldner, this thesis in its aim to "restore" the Kallipolis, further elaborates this position by attempting to demonstrate the inherent relationship of the Socratic elenchus (Plato's earlier dialectic) with the dialectical construction of the ideal commonwealth in the Republic. We thus see that the Socratic elenchus is, in fact, eristic in character. In other words, many of Plato's dialogues written before the Republic are negative and destructive of ideas and beliefs that Plato held to be in error. As such, Plato had to destroy before he could build. There is, in this sense, a deliberate and conscious attempt by Plato to realize the Kallipolis in earnest.

The assistance of Professor John D. Shingler in the preparation of this thesis has been immeasurable. I am profoundly grateful. Needless to say, all remaining mistakes are of my own doing.

The best state is that in which bad men are not allowed to hold office, and good men are not allowed to refuse office.

— Pittacus of Lesbos

[Plato] first, and perhaps last, maintained that a State ought to be governed, not by the wealthiest, or the most ambitious, or the most cunning, but by the wisest.

— Percy Bysshe Shelley

The English are a political nation and I was often asked to houses where politics were the ruling interest. I could not discover in the eminent statesmen I met there any marked capacity. I concluded, perhaps, rashly, that no great degree of intelligence was needed to rule a nation. Since then I have known in various countries a good many politicians who have attained high office. I have continued to be puzzled by what seemed to me the mediocrity of their minds. I have found them ill-informed upon the ordinary affairs of life and I have not often discovered in them either sublety of intellect or liveliness of imagination.

— W. Somerset Maugham (1938)

INTRODUCTION

The Legacy of Plato

> The influence (for good or ill) of Plato's work is immeasurable. Western thought, one might say, has been either Platonic or anti-Platonic, but hardly ever non-Platonic.
>
> --Karl R. Popper[1]

It is not uncommon for scholastic exegesis upon Plato's thought to begin with words of the following gist.

> Let us be clear about one thing: We are dealing with one of the world's keenest, most inventive minds, one of the most original and refined minds. There is little reason to labor this point, for it has been agreed upon by the great majority of Plato's readers, even most of those to whom the philosophy of Plato is confusing, wrong or irrelevant.[2]

And indeed, the spell of Plato is felt even before an actual inquiry of the dialogues can be begun in earnest. For one thing, you are immediately impressed with the fact that all of Plato's works which were meant to see the light of publication (together with a number of spurious dialogues and letters) have reached us intact. This complete survival of the Platonic corpus should not be underestimated. For, as Moses Hadas put it: "The simplest explanation of the survival of the classics is that ordinary readers have found them worth preserving."[3] In this sense, it has been

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[1] Karl R. Popper, "Plato," The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, vol. XII, 1968, p. 163.

[2] George Kimball Plochmann, Plato (New York: Dell, 1973), p. 7.

[3] Moses Hadas, Ancilla to Classical Reading (Morningside Heights, New York: Columbia U. P., 1954), p. 3.

argued that "time" is the closest thing to an infallible literary critic; and that the surviving Hellenic classical texts are of such high quality because most of the inferior ones have been filtered out through the ages. Unfortunately, however, this natural process of selection has been hampered by religion. Precious manuscripts were duly disposed of by the Eastern and Western Churches, in the ardent pursuit of protecting Christian morality from sinful literature. Thus the poems of Sappho,[1] together with the texts of other immoral idolaters (by the church's judgment) were ceremoniously put to flames. We may never know how much spiritually poorer we are today because of such needless acts of vandalism. However, if it is of any consolation, the manuscripts which survived the necropolis of inferior works and the bonfires of the church were "regarded in ancient times as the best."[2] And the works of Plato are prominent jewels in this chest of hereditary treasures.

The thought of Plato when placed in the wider context of Western philosophy, has been lavishly praised and bitterly attacked. His followers would find nothing wrong with The Philosopher: "To this day, all philosophic truth is Plato rightly divined; all philosophic error is Plato misunderstood."[3]

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[1] See David M. Robinson, Sappho and her Influence (Boston: Marshall Jones Company, 1924), p. 134.

[2] H. C. Baldry, Ancient Greek Literature (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), p. 9. "For if the remains of Greek Literature are lamentably small, at least they are singularly free from rubbish, which cannot be said of the literature of any subsequent period in any country." T. A. Sinclair, A History of Classical Greek Literature (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1934), p. 4. "But the accidents of survival have not been entirely accidental after all, for so much that has come down to us is excellent. Indeed, even this small proportion of all that was written adds up to the greatest quantity of varied excellence that any literature in the world has ever produced." Michael Grant, ed., Greek Literature (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976), p. 11.

[3] J. F. Ferrier, Institutes of Metaphysic (3rd ed.; Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1875), p. 169.

and "... Plato has been the source of all that is best and of most importance in our civilization."[1] These above remarks of Platonolatry are contrasted with: "Plato's philosophy is the most savage and the most profound attack upon liberal ideas which history can show. It denies every action of 'progressive' thought and challenges all its fondest ideas."[2] But whatever powerful emotions Plato arouses,[3] one cannot deny his importance and influence. With the possible exception of Nietzsche who found him "boring"[4] not even his severest critics could deny his influence. Thus Popper would freely admit that Plato is, by far, the greatest philosopher who ever lived. And for this reason, he very eloquently argues, we must all attempt to denounce the brilliant but nevertheless dangerous influence of Plato.[5]

"The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition," pointed out Alfred North Whitehead, "is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato."[6] It is similarly stated that, "... to include everyone influenced by Plato would be simply to catalog Western

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[1] John Burnet, Platonism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1928), p. 1.

[2] R. H. S. Crossmann, Plato Today (2nd ed.; London: Unwin, 1963), p. 84.

[3] The logomachy between the so-called critics and defenders rages with "a conviction and vitality which would imply that their very lives depend upon it (as perhaps they do, in an intellectual sense)." Mulford Q. Sibley, "The Place of Classical Political Theory in the Study of Politics: The Legitimate Spell of Plato," in Roland Young ed., Approaches to the Study of Politics (Evanston Illinois: Northwestern U. P., 1958), p. 126.

[4] Friedrich Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols and the Anti Christ, trans. by R.J. Hollindale (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 106.

[5] See K. R. Popper, The Open Society and its Enemies, vol. I (5th ed.; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 343.

[6] A. N. Whitehead, Process and Reality (New York: The Social Science Book Store, 1929), p. 63.

civilization."[1] Again, Emerson in echoing Plutarch would observe that "Plato is philosophy, and philosophy, Plato."[2] Finally, Hegel writes that "Plato is one of those world-famed individuals, his philosophy one of those world-renowned creations, whose influence, as regards the culture and development of the mind, has from its commencement down to the present time been all-important."[3] However, I understand that it is not enough to pile Gloria in Excelsis assertions (no matter how influential the contributor), in order to demonstrate that someone was a great thinker. Thus I agree with Professor Robinson that "greatness ... consists mainly in leaving the subject much more advanced than when you entered it."[4] An examination of Plato clearly reveals that he passed this test with flying colours. Plato was able to bring together the materialistic and idealistic awareness of the pre-Socratic philosophers with the practical, ethical teaching of Socrates in order to create in the Republic the first complete system of political theory. In short, he initiated the first systematic political discussion.[5]

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[1] Barry Gross, ed., Great Thinkers on Plato (New York: Capricon Books, 1969), p. vii.

[2] Ralph Waldo Emerson, Representative Men: Seven Lectures (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1903), p. 40.

[3] G. W. F. Hegel, Lectures on the History of Philosophy, vol. II, trans. by E. S. Halnane and Frances H. Simpson (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1894), p. 2.

[4] Richard Robinson, Plato's Earlier Dialectic (2nd ed.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), p. vi.

[5] "Plato was the first to make political questions the center of his attention and to ask the epistemological, metaphysical, and ethical questions that must arise in any political inquiry. Assuming the institutional polis as in some sense the imperfect reflection of a metaphysically "real" polis, and making practical questions (that is, ethical and political) the center of his discussion, he then proceeds to examine what the polis as a type of political institution is trying to become." Sibley, "The Legitimate Spell of Plato," p. 128.

He thus paved the ground for future developments in political philosophy. "He was a pioneer moving through terra incognita,"[1] and the Republic was his vehicle. George H. Sabine has observed:

> Few books that claim to be treatises on politics are so closely reasoned or so well co-ordinated as the Republic. None perhaps contains a line of thought so bold, so original, or so provocative.... The Republic is eternally the voice of the Scholar, the profession of faith of the intellectual, who sees in knowledge and enlightenment the forces upon which social progress must rely.[2]

It is precisely this notion of the Platonic Kallipolis (best or ideal polis, Republic 527c) that this thesis attempts to reiterate. For, despite the efforts in the first half of this century by Sabine, Burnet, Taylor, Barker and Cornford among others, scholarship since the Second World War has for the most part rejected the Platonic Kallipolis. The rejection has come from two distinct lines of interpretation. The first, spearheaded by Sir Karl Popper identifying the liberal-democratic position and Benjamin Farrington expanding the Marxist line, is blatantly direct in calling the Kallipolis abnormal, totalitarian and reactionary. To the second, belong commentators who view the Republic not as a practical political work, but, rather, as an intellectual seeking of the Divine (Voegelin, Cushman), and as a drama that demonstrates the limits of politics (Strauss, Bloom). Needless to say, for the purposes of this work both lines of exposition contain serious flaws that will be looked at in detail in part one of the thesis. In turn, the practical posibility of the Kallipolis will be presented in part two.

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[1] Gregory Vlastos, ed., Plato, vol. I (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1971), p. 1.

[2] George H. Sabine and Thomas L. Thorson, A History of Political Theory (4th ed.; Hinsdale Illinois: Dryden Press, 1973), pp. 71-2.

Plato's Dialogues: Literature and Philosophy

> Plato exhibits the rare union of close and subtle logic, with the Pythian enthusiasm of poetry by the splendour and harmony of his periods into one irresistible stream of musical impressions; which hurry the persuasions onward, as in a breathless career. His language is that of an immortal spirit, rather than a man.... His imitator, Cicero, sinks in the comparison into an ape mocking the gestures of a man.
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> -- Percy Bysshe Shelley[1]

Plato is one of those rare individuals in the history of Western civilization, who can make an equal claim to fame for more than a single reason: as a philosopher, and as a writer. It is true, however, that today Plato the philosopher has overshadowed Plato the writer. But this was not always the case. During Cicero's time, Plato's dialogues were acted on stage. The following anonymus reference preserved in the Palatine Anthology (IX, 188) reveals the high esteem the ancient critics had for Plato.

> You were the most accomplished stylist of the fine Attic tongue, and all Greek literature has no greater voice than yours. Inspired Plato, you were the first to contemplate ethics and life, looking to God and heaven. You combined the high thinking of Pythagoras with the cutting spirit of Sokrates, and were a beautiful monument of their solemn dimension.[2]

In fact, before his eventful meeting with Socrates at the age of twenty, Plato "applied himself to painting and wrote poems, first dithyrambs, afterwards lyric poems and tragedies" (Diog. Laert., 3, 5). Had he continued writing poetry, instead of bonfiring his youthful works, undoubtedly, he

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[1] P. B. Shelley, Essays, Letters from Abroad, vol. I, ed. Mary Shelley (London: Edward Moxon, 1852), pp. 59-60.

[2] Willis Barnastone, trans., Greek Lyric Poetry (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1967), p. 178.

would have been a great poet. For, his poem Aster has been called the most perfect of all epigrams.[1]

Ἀστὴρ πρὶν μὲν ἔλαμπες ἐνὶ ζωοῖσιν Ἑῷος
νῦν δὲ θανὼν λάμπεις Ἕσπερος ἐν φθιμένοις.

(Pal. Anth. VII, 670).[2]

Fortunately, however, "paper is more easily burned than poetry;"[3] and thus Plato's great dramatic and poetic powers are found all through his dialogues.[4] Alexandre Koyré has pointed out "... that Plato was not only a great, a very great philosopher, but also (some even say especially) a great, a very great writer."[5]

On the other hand, this particular strength of Plato causes grave problems for a commentator undertaking to supply an exegesis of his thought. Thus, concerning Plato's erudite genius Professor Walter Kaufmann has observed:

> There are philosophers who can write and philosophers who cannot. Most of the great philosophers belong to the first group. There

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Shelley's verse rendering is the best-known translation. The Ancient Greeks, however, never used rhyme because they did not like it. The following translation is by Constantine A. Trypanis, The Penguin Book of Greek Verse (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), p. 275.

> As the Morning Star you shone in the past among the living; but now, dead, you shine like the Evening Star among those that have perished.

[3] Frederick J. E. Woodbridge, The Son of Apollo (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1929), p. 10.

[4] "Plato is a philosopher because he is a poet. True philosophy is poetry -- poetic insight and vision, the imaginative enhancement of life. At least, we are so convinced while we are reading Plato." J. H. Randall, Jr., Plato: Dramatist of the Life of Reason (New York: Columbia U. P., 1970), p. 3

[5] A. Koyré, Discovering Plato, trans. by Cohen Rosenfield (New York: Columbia U. P., 1945), p. 4.

> are also, much more rarely, philosophers who can write too well for their own good -- as philosophers. Plato wrote so dramatically that we shall never know for sure what precisely he himself thought about any number of questions.[1]

Similarly, some fifty years earlier, the eminent Platonic scholar James Adam wrote:

> ... there can never be a definitive or final interpretation of the Republic: for the Republic is one of those few works of genius which have a perennial interest and value for the human race; and in every successive generation those in whom man's inborn passion for ideals is not quenched, will claim the right to interpret the fountain-head of idealism for themselves, in the light of their own experience and needs.[2]

Such an opportunity for interpretation -- even though it exists in most great political thinkers; Machiavelli, Rousseau and Hegel come immediately to mind -- presents a unique chance for any commentator, not only to present what he believes Plato actually said, but also to present it in a manner that will suit his intellectual background, training and prejudices. For example, Karl Popper, an Austrian, uprooted and exiled to New Zealand by Nazism, bitter and disillusioned, made The Open Society and its Enemies his "war effort"[3] for the preservation of freedom against totalitarian regimes. Popper found Nazism's philosophical roots in Hegel and Hegel's spiritual roots in Plato. Could it be, that this period of calamity had such a negative influence on Popper that his treatment of Plato was less than fair?

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[1] W. Kaufmann, ed., The Portable Nietzsche (New York: The Viking Press, 1954), p. 1.

[2] The Republic of Plato, vol. I, ed. by James Adam (Cambridge: C. U. P., 1902), p. vii. "His dialogues show an extraordinary sympathy for every mood, struggle, and achievement of human nature, however fantastic; they convey a multitude of striking impressions; and what is most disconcerning to the reader accustomed to well-charted philosophic paths, they open up a thousand leads which, like the course of a ship blown hither and thither by conflicting blasts, compel attention, but lead to no predetermined haven of conclusion." F. H. Anderson, The Argument of Plato (Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1934), pp. 1-2.

[3] Karl Popper, Unended Quest (London: Fontana-Collins, 1976), p. 115.

If Popper wrote a generation earlier, would he have arrived at the same conclusions? In other words, how does one's social-political position influence one's outlook?

Certainly, Popper is guilty of ignoring this timely advice of A. E. Taylor (which was recorded in the Preface of the first edition (1926) of his momentous work entitled Plato: The Man and his Work).

> The sense of the greatest thinker of the ancient world ought not to be trimmed to suit the tastes of a modern neo-Kantian, neo-Hegelian, or neo-realist. Again to understand Plato's thought we must see it in the right historical perspective.[1]

But it is not only Popper who is not heedful of this warning. Thus we have this remark by Professor Leo Strauss. "No interpretation of Plato's teaching can be proved fully by historical evidence. For the crucial part of his interpretation the interpreter has to fall back on his own resources."[2] It is my belief, however, that such an approach to studying Plato is full of pitfalls. This is especially so with Plato, because of his great dramatic powers, which can obscure or highlight the actual meaning of the text. For this reason, we must not interpret Plato in a vacuum. Our rendering must be conducted in a historical context, if we are fully to understand Plato.

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[1] A. E. Taylor, Plato: The Man and his Work (6th ed.; New York: Meridien Books, 1956), p. vii. "... it is obvious that to understand him at all we have to think of him as a Greek writing in fourth-century Athens and not as an Englishman writing at the present day.... Plato, like every other thinker, was largely a child of his age." G. C. Field, The Philosophy of Plato (2nd ed.; London: Oxford U. P., 1969), p. 149.

[2] Leo Strauss, "On New Interpretation of Plato's Political Philosophy," Social Research, vol. XIII, 1946, p. 351. In fact, Allan Bloom has recently reinstated his late teacher's position by arguing that the study of political theory must be conducted through a reading of the texts alone. See Allan Bloom, "The Study of Texts," in Melvin Richter, ed., Political Theory and Political Education (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton U. P., 1980), pp. 31-40, 113-38.

PART ONE: The Kallipolis Denied

CHAPTER ONE

Plato's Alleged Totalitarianism

> A few years ago an international committee of classical scholars decided that 1974 was to be the 2,400th anniversary of Plato's birth.... welcoming it as a ceremonial date which offers a once-in-a-lifetime challenge to take stock of Plato's achievement in its entirety and reassess each of his many-sided contributions to Western thought. With this in view I put this question to myself. "What is that aspect of Plato's thought which has suffered the most in my lifetime through misunderstanding or neglect?" To this my answer has been, unhesitatingly, "his theory of social justice."
>
> -- Gregory Vlastos[1]

Perhaps, it is not an accident that the beginnings of the Renaissance coincided with the re-discovery of Plato. The fall of Constantinople in 1453 brought many Byzantine Greek teachers with precious manuscripts that were previously unknown in the West.[2] It thus enabled Marsilio Ficino to publish in 1482 a complete Latin translation of Plato with introductory essays. This publication, as Professor Shorey put it, "was one of the greatest events in European literary history. For three centuries it was to all educated Europe what Jowett's Plato has been to the England and America the past forty years."[3] In fact, Ficino who maintained that "whoever ...

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[1] Gregory Vlastos, "The Theory of Social Justice in the Polis in Plato's Republic" in Interpretation of Plato, ed. Helen F. North (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977), p. 1.

[2] See Paul Shorey, Platonism: Ancient and Modern (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1938), pp. 118-45; James A. Notopoulos, The Platonism of Shelley (Durham, North Carolina: Duke U. P., 1949), pp. 99-103; K. I. Logothetis, Ἡ Φιλοσοφία τῆς Ἀναγεννήσεως [The Philosophy of the Renaissance] (Athens, 1955), pp. 13-47.

[3] Shorey, Platonism, p. 121.

accurately reads Plato's work will learn everything,"[1] also established a Platonic Academy in Florence which "contributed to the lasting revival of the classical, humanistic tradition in the modern world."[2]

Thus, Plato's thought, which was viewed as the "philosophical godfather"[3] of the Renaissance, escaped reproachful notices until the start of the First World War. However, it is also true that before this tide of twentieth century criticism Plato was in certain isolated instances severely criticized. For Bolingbroke (1678-1751) the fact that Plato's ideas had influenced and helped the development of Christianity was anathema. Bolingbroke's deistic metaphysics, which recognized only a universe devised by a perfect god, were in direct opposition with the speculative tendencies of Platonism.[4] Another vitriolic attack was that of Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-65), who vehemently objected to the lax sexual morality of Plato's ideals.[5] But such criticisms were the exception rather than the rule until the arrival of Plato's "modern enemies"[6] in this century.

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[1]Cited by Leland Miles, John Colet and the Platonic Tradition (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1961), p. 9.

[2]Hans Meyerhoff, "Plato Among Friends and Enemies," in R. Bambrough ed., Plato, Popper and Politics (Cambridge: Heffer, 1967), p. 187.

[3]Ibid.

[4]See The Philosophical Works of Henry St. John, Lord Viscount Bolingbroke, 5 vols. (London: David Mallet, 1754), vol. 2, pp. 111-4, 358-9.

[5]See John Bowle, Politics and Opinion in the Nineteenth Century (London: Jonathan Cape, 1954), p. 161.

[6]I am borrowing this phrase from the title of John Wild's Plato's Modern Enemies and the Theory of Natural Law (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953). The climate of pro-and anti-Platonic scholarship from antiquity to the arrival of Plato's modern enemies, has been excellently summarized by Ronald B. Levinson, In Defence of Plato (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U. P., 1953), pp. 3-6, 407-8.

In 1912, the noted philhellene Sir Richard Livingstone fired the initial condemning blast upon Plato's political thought. In a work that has been virtually ignored by Platonic scholarship, Livingstone found Plato to be hostile to liberty and to the humanistic tendencies of the other Greeks in general.[1] According to Livingstone, the fault lies with Plato's "pessimism"[2] and "mistrust of human nature."[3] In short, Plato's ideals shattered the "liberty of which Thucydides and Pericles dreamed."[4] However, Livingstone's criticisms were a voice in the wilderness, for none of Plato's subsequent detractors seems to be aware of his arguments. As such, it took the rise to power of the likes of Mussolini, Stalin and Hitler to ignite, almost spontaneously, the fire beneath Plato's modern enemies. They thus traced Plato's concept of elite rule over Athenian democracy, as a forerunning notion to twentieth-century totalitarianism. In other words, Plato's critics sought the parallels of a modern political development, and (especially) its deformities, in the Platonic dialogues. Thus, Popper writes: "my attempt is to understand Plato by analogy with modern totalitarianism."[5] I have already expressed my opinion of such an unhistorical approach (p. 9 above), but it is worth repeating. Setting Plato in a modern perspective and saddling him with newly developed problems is an unfortunate distortion of the actual Plato -- the Plato of fourth century Athens.

Thereafter, there was no holding the floodgates: Chapman (1931),[6]

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[1] R. W. Livingstone, The Greek Genious and its Meaning to Us (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), pp. 183-97.

[2] Ibid., p. 196.

[3] Ibid., p. 9.

[4] Ibid., p. 189.

[5] Popper, Open Society, p. 170.

[6] John Jay Chapman, Lucian, Plato and Greek Morals (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1931).

Fite (1934),[1] Crossman (1937), Toynbee (1934-39),[2] Winspear (1940),[3] Farrington (1944),[4] Popper (1945) and Russell (1947),[5] among others, did their very best in damning Plato's thought. Professor Renford Bambrough has described this massive assault as war upon Plato.

> This Thirty Years' War was declared by a number of lively and influential books, each from its own point of view attacking the central political doctrines to be found in Plato's dialogues, and especially the Republic.[6]

Words were not minced. Bertrand Russell who found the Republic "repulsive," even attacked Plato's admirers. According to Russell, anyone who thinks highly of Plato's political programme in the Republic, must be either a great snob, or very stupid.[7]

Basically, with the exception of John Jay Chapman in his attempt to demonstrate that Lucian was in fact an apostle of common-sense and Plato an incompetent thinker,[8] Plato's modern enemies find common ground in one point: that Plato was a totalitarian. However, for some he was a fascist[9] and for others a Bolshevik.[10] And in the eyes of Bertrand Russell he was both.

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[1] Warner Fite, The Platonic Legend (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931).

[2] Arnold Toynbee, A Study of History (London: Oxford U. P., 1934-39).

[3] Alban Dewes Winspear, The Genesis of Plato's Thought (3rd ed.; Montreal: Harvest House, 1974).

[4] Benjamin Farrington, Greek Science (Rev. ed.; Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1961); also The Faith of Epicurus (New York: Basic Books, 1967).

[5] B. Russell, Philosophy and Politics (London: Cambridge U. P., 1947). Reprinted in Unpopular Essays (London: Allen & Unwin, 1950).

[6] R. Bambrough, "Plato's Modern Friends and Enemies," Philosophy, vol. XXXVII, 1962, p. 98.

[7] Russell, Philosophy and Politics, p. 13.

[8] Chapman, p. 176.

[9] Crossman, p. 144.

[10] Fite, p. 218.

"Such, however, was his artistic skill that Liberals never noticed his reactionary tendencies until his disciples Lenin and Hitler had supplied them with practical exegesis."[1]

Hence two common charges may be distinguished in the many attacks upon Plato: (1) he was an enemy of Periclean democracy, and (2) the values of his ideal state (Kallipolis) were totalitarian, abnormal and repressive. However, I believe that both charges fail in their assessment of Plato.

The first charge does not come as a surprise. Plato did not deny the fact that he was on bad terms with the Athenian democratic institutions. Let us not forget that Plato lived after the golden age of Pericles. The Pentecontaetia,[2] which had been nourished by Athenian imperialism had finally crumbled on the shores of Syracuse. This was a new democracy; and in the eyes of Plato it was evil, because it had, after all, condemned Socrates to death.

> The Peloponnesian War indicated in a glaring manner the faults of Athens' imperialistic democracy, but after losing to Sparta, Athens sought scapegoats to explain her downfall. Socrates' death remained a blemish that gave future thinkers pause about the inner brutality of democracy in defeat.[3]

And nobody saw this more clearly than Plato. His whole political position was influenced by the failure of both the "right" (government of the thirty tyrants) and the "left" (subsequent democratic government) to control the confusion of Athens after the Peloponnesian War. In his eyes both the oligarchical and the democratic factions had failed miserably. Therefore,

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[1]Russell, Philosophy and Politics, p. 13, italics added. "The very lack of distinction between Hitler and Lenin, even if one happens to dislike both, is philosophically disturbing." Robin Barrow, Plato, Utilitarianism and Education (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 3.

[2]The fifty golden years of Athenian greatness were between the end of the Persian wars, and the start of the Peloponnesian war. See Thucydides I 89-118.

[3]John Scarborough, Facets of Hellenic Life (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976), p. 200.

Plato, who "grew up in a period when the established order and accepted standards seemed on the verge of dissolution under the pressure of political events and theoretical criticism,"[1] felt that it was his duty to respond. And indeed, he responded! His plan -- as grandiose and ambitious as it could be -- called for the entire reconstruction of the whole of society. The Kallipolis was Plato's prescribed therapy.[2] But before he proceeds with his "rational social change"[3] he first identifies the disorders of his own time. Each single polis of his age (no matter its constitutional make-up -- in being a democracy, an oligarchy, or a tyranny) was "... many cities.... For indeed any city, however small, is in fact divided into two, one the city of the poor, the other of the rich; these are at war with one another..." (Republic 423a, Jowett's translation).

> Plato was determined to save the polis by putting an end to faction, but his solution was not external, in the form of gaining wealth by conquest. On the contrary, it was internal, to reform the morals and institutions of the polis so that the evils of selfishness, luxury, and corruption might not be fed but eliminated.[4]

Plato's unhappiness with the Athenian democracy stemmed from its method of selecting the ruling body in government. Plato found it odd that, "whereas only a person who had acqired skills could make such things as shoes and ships, all men could have a sense of justice and civic duty."[5] In other words, for Plato, Athenian democracy was a government of amateur

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[1] G. C. Field, Plato and his Contemporaries (2nd ed.; London: Methuen, 1948), p. 91.

[2] See Alvin W. Gouldner, Enter Plato (New York: Basic Books, 1965), p. 259.

[3] Ibid., p. 236.

[4] Donald Kagan, The Great Dialogue: History of Greek Political Thought from Homer to Polybius (New York: The Free Press, 1965), p. 159.

[5] G. F. Parker, A Short Account of Greek Philosophy from Thales to Epicurus (London: Edward Arnold, 1967), p. 105.

politicians. A carpenter's main function is to provide society with sea-worthy ships and sturdy houses. Hopefully, after many years of apprentice-ship and practical experience, he will be in a position to perform his assigned job well. How, then, can we expect the same man to govern justly when he is periodically asked to do so? Obviously, his field of expertise is elsewhere. He is a professional carpenter. Is the art of governing, the Royal Art -- in Plato's estimation, such an easy affair that anyone, even those lacking training and experience can execute admirably? Plato does not believe so. A good and just Ruler will be the product of a long educational program. Thus, like the carpenter, he will be a professional in his own right. Moreover, he will not attempt to build ships or houses. For Plato this point is crucial. Competence within the limits of your responsibilities -- "minding your own business (433b)" is an essential prerequisite for the building of a just society. Indeed, in the similes of the "sea-captain" (488a-489a) and the "large and powerful animal" (493a-c), Plato paints a bleak picture of a society run by amateur politicians (ordinary craftsmen lacking proper qualifications and training in the matters of government); such men being influenced by public opinion generally make bad decisions and reject good advice when it is offered. It is precisely this lack of distinction in what is good or bad in the governing of the state, that the education of the philosopher-Rulers attempts to remedy. Whereas democracy "with a magnificent indifference to the sort of life a man has led before he enters politics will promote to honour anyone who merely calls himself the peoples friend (558b-c)," [1] Plato, on the other hand, argues that just as a doctor should not beg the sick to let him cure them, a philosopher-Ruler

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[1] Plato, The Republic, trans. by Desmond Lee (2nd ed.; Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974), p. 376.

should not implore the populace to let themselves be ruled justly (489b-c). Because contemporary democratic society prefered to select its rulers in this defective manner, men of knowledge and wisdom (philosopher-Rulers) stand aside from the corruption of political life. For this reason, the evils of society will not end until its citizens stop rejecting, and instead accept such lovers of wisdom (apparenty educated in the Academy) as their rulers.

Democracy, then, was not a scientific process in deciding public policy, because it relied upon the uncertain interaction of social forces, instead of careful and intelligent planning. Furthermore, public policy was at the mercy of ever changing electoral majorities, that were pursued not by reason, but by emotion, flattery, greed and propaganda. Such a non-scientific approach to politics paved the road for despotic tyranny (Republic 562a-576b), the worst type of government according to Plato. The democracy Plato criticized was one full of anomalies. One simply has to follow Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War to see it in action. The Mytilenean affair which almost resulted in the eradication of the whole populace, the massacre at Melos,[1] and the disastrous results of the Sicilian expedition are the fruits of Athenian democracy. On the other hand, Plato proposed a scientific study of political actions. Richard Robinson, in his review of Popper's Open Society and Its Enemies, has noted:

> Dr. Popper does not bring out or face Plato's best and most serious argument for his political proposals, namely that government is a science and should be left to experts. Plato argues, and Plato sincerely believed, that it is as absurd to govern by popular vote as it would be to conduct medicine or navigation by popular vote. That is the point of the simile of the Ship in Republic 488. The

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[1] The brutal callousness of Athens is frankly described by Thucydides. "The Melians surrendered unconditionally to the Athenians, who put to death all the men of military age whom they took, and sold the women and children as slaves (V 116)."

> error of democracy, according to Plato, is that it denies the possibility of science in government...[1]

Henceforth, Plato's plea is for expertise in government. But this crucial aspect of Plato's political theory has been virtually ignored by his modern enemies. Professor M. I. Finley attempted (in a paragraph) to refute Plato's call for science in government.

> One of Plato's favourite arguments was to draw an analogy between the state and a ship. Is it logical, he asked time and again, to allow shoemakers and carpenters to make policy in the state, a role for which they have no specialist training? Would you let a carpenter or a shoemaker steer a ship in place of the captain or the steerman? Of course specialists and experts are needed. When I charter a vessel or buy passage on one, I leave it to the captain, the expert, to navigate it -- but I decide where I want to go, not the captain.[2]

If I understood Professor Finley's argument correctly, he proposes that we can train or hire experts to govern; but in turn, we, the public, maintain the right to instruct these experts how our society is to be run, or, at any rate, what direction to take. This is, of course, fine and commendable, if the whole populace is in agreement concerning the course and goals of the community. Is this possible? Surely not. In fact, if there was such universal agreement among the population there would not have been any need for government. There is bound to be disagreement between the different social-economic classes of the state. And since the whole community has hired these experts, to whom should they listen? To the majority, or to the citizens who have wealth and influence? No doubt, it is a vicious circle. Unlike Zeno's of Citium (336-264 B.C.) visualization of an ideal society without any form of government, Plato's Kallipolis was far more realistic and practical. Zeno believed that if men were left alone to

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[1] R. Robinson, Essays in Greek Philosophy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 82.

[2] M. I. Finley, Aspects of Antiquity (2nd ed.; Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977), p. 87.

respond to their natural instincts they would have absolutely no need for temples, courts, prisons, mints, or armies. Clearly, Zeno's anarchism was in direct opposition to Plato's stratified society with philosophers at the helm. As such, the main difference between Zeno and Plato revolves around the question of the possible perfectibility of man: around the means and the degree it can be accomplished. Whereas Zeno believed that perfection for everyone (or nearly everyone) lies with the removal of the government apparatus, Plato emphasizes education as a means to perfection, and furthermore makes a distinction between a perfectible elite (philosopher-Rulers) and the non-perfectible masses (494a). It thus appears that Plato, in planning the Kallipolis, took into account human nature. But, unlike Zeno's hopelessly utopian call for human salvation, Plato was prepared to take human nature for what it is -- far from being perfect, and almost impossible to change. The following statement of Professor Gouldner is wonderfully pertinent here.

> Far from being tender-minded, Plato, it would appear, was among the more tough-minded of social theorists ever to write. He may have wanted the best from men, but he certainly expected the worst.[1]

But it was not only Plato who was grieved with the results of the Athenian democratic institutions. Similarly, Euripides in the Trojan Women (415 B.C.), a play produced merely four months after the destruction of Melos, in thinly veiled words expresses his horror with Athenian policy.

> The mortal is mad who sacks cities and desolates temples and tombs, the holy places of the dead; his own doom is only delayed (95-7).[2]

We now see that Euripides' words (and for this matter Plato's also) were remarkably prophetic. Three generations later in the battle of Chaeronea

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[1] Gouldner, p. 293.

[2] Euripides, Ten Plays, trans. by Moses Hadas and John McLean (New York: Bantam Books, 1960), p. 177.

(338 B.C.) Philip of Macedon crushed the Athenian armies, and thus reduced Athens to the "glory that it was." This end was not sudden or abrupt. Euripides' dramatic verses were an early warning, even though they lacked precision and therapy. Plato's Republic, however, was a full scale exposition that not only prognosticated Athens' fate, but also proposed an alternate solution. The end of the Peloponnesian war changed fundamentally the social make-up of Athens. In this period, from the death of Socrates (399) to the time Plato wrote the Republic (around the foundation of the Academy in 387), the political climate in Athens had grown ugly.

> Athens recovered wealth, but this was now commercial rather than landed wealth; industrialists, merchants, and bankers were at the top of the reshuffled heap. The change produced a feverish struggle for money, a pleonexia, as the Greeks called it -- an appetite for more and more. The nouveaux riches (neoploutoi) built gaudy mansions, bedecked their women with costly robes and jewelry, spoiled them with dozens of servants, rivaled one another in the feasts with which they regaled their guests. The gap between the rich and the poor widened; Athens was divided, as Plato put it, into "two cities: ... one the city of the poor, the other of the rich, the one at war with the other."[1]

For Plato, excessive liberalism and individualism is the grave weakness of democracy. It does not only ruin itself, but it also damages the fabric of the state to such a great extent that it eventually fosters tyranny (562a-570e).

> So the only outcome of too much freedom is likely to be excessive subjection, in the state or in the individual; which means that the culmination of liberty in democracy is precisely what prepares the

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[1] Will and Ariel Durant, The Lessons of History (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1968), p. 74. "In every city the rich and the poor were two enemies living by the side of each other, the one coveting wealth, and the other seeing their wealth coveted. No relation, no service, no labor united them. The poor could acquire wealth only by despoiling the rich. The rich could defend their property only by extreme skill or by force. They regarded each other with the eyes of hate. There was a double conspiracy in every city; the poor conspired from cupidity, the rich from fear. Aristotle says the rich took the following oath among themselves: 'I swear always to remain the enemy of the people, and to do them all the injury in my power' [Politics, VIII. 7, 19]." Fustel de Coulanges, The Ancient City (Garden City, N. Y.: A Doubleday Anchor Books, n. d.), p. 340.

way for the cruellest extreme of servitude under a despot (ἐξ οἵας τῆς ἀκροτάτης ἐλευθερίας δουλεία πλείστη τε καὶ ἀγριωτάτη 564A).[1] In other words, "Athenian democracy disappeared under Macedonian dictatorship."[2] The Athenian moral fibre had become so rotten that even Demosthenes' brilliant and moving speeches could not stir the patriotism of the Athenians. They were routed and ran: "Demosthenes running with the fleetest."[3] Athenian degeneration was complete. Apparently the former masters of Hellas were reduced to rhetoric rather than to courage and wisdom.[4]

> The battle of Chaeronea has often been held to mark the end of Greek freedom; from then until the Roman conquest the Greek cities had to reckon constantly with the behaviour and wishes of Macedonian princes.[5]

Did Plato forsee the eventual ruin of Athens because of its excessive individualism and the pleonexia of its citizens? It is true that, according to his description, despotism (562a-576b) is based on an internal conflict of monetary interests. But, on the other hand, did this internal bickering weaken Athens so much that it could offer no substantial resistance to the armies of Philip? Plato lived through this turmoil. His observations are

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[1] The Republic of Plato, trans. by F. M. Cornford (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1941), p. 283.

[2] Durant, p. 75.

[3] J. B. Bury and R. Meiggs, A History of Greece (4th rev. ed.; London: Macmillan, 1978), p. 440.

[4] In the Gorgias, Plato paints a bleak picture of rhetoric. The rhetorician is presented as an individual who is able through persuasive arguments to influence the actions of the people, while being able to keep his enemies at bay. He has no real knowledge of what he proclaims. It is a case of the ignorant orator attempting to influence the ignorant masses. Persuasive speeches based on ignorance would not save Athens. This will be the job of individuals trained to comprehend the just and the good. As such, the Gorgias mirrors the fuller developed arguments of the Republic. See Alasdair MacIntyre, A Short History of Ethics (New York: Macmillan, 1966), p. 3.

[5] Raphael Sealey, A History of the Greek City States (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 491.

a living document of what was wrong with Athenian democracy. He saw "stasis" everywhere; but Athens, the polis in which he was raised, was his living proof. Indeed, the aim of his Kallipolis was simple. He proposed that government was to be left in the hands of experts (trained accordingly) and not of amateurs, and he attempted to extinguish the ever-present conflict between rich and poor (550c-555b).

Plato believed that Athens had become too permissive by being intoxicated (μεθυσθῆ) with excessive liberty (562d). Hence Plato attempted to balance the anomia of too much freedom with a necessary degree of authority that would hold society together and at the same time make life tolerable. After all, the citizens of certain ancient Greek poleis in search of political stability and order, elected tyrants (aisymnetai) to rule them (Aristotle Politics 1285a).[1] In this sense, democracy in Plato's age was not the best possible type of government. Plato understood that, and thus attempted in theory and praxis to construct an ideal society that appealed equally to Athens and all other Hellenic poleis (470e). The people would not have to look around for an aisymnetes anymore, as did the citizens of Lesbos. In short, the Platonic Kallipolis is the answer to elective tyrants (aisymnetai).

The second charge levelled by Plato's modern enemies is not as clear cut. Plato, for example, is severely criticized for expounding a rigid, or caste society, governed by racists.[2] Furthermore, Popper ascribes to Plato the notion that the function of the philosopher-Rulers and the guardians is that of shepherds ruling over human cattle. Hence we have "... Plato's

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[1]See A. Andrews, The Greek Tyrants (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1956), pp. 92-9.

[2]Popper, Open Society, p. 46.

reiterated insistence that good rulers, whether gods or demigods or guardians, are patriarchal shepherds of men, and that the true political art, the art of ruling, is a kind of herdsmanship, i. e., the art of managing and keeping down the human cattle."[1] This is by no means true. When the caste system is in force, a man's birth decides his social position and ultimately his vocation. On the other hand, in Plato's ideal state anyone could be educated, not only to become an auxiliary, but also a philosopher-Ruler. And just as anybody can move up in the educational system, anybody can be demoted from a higher to a lower class. Plato is quite explicit about this point.

> Therefore the first and most important of god's commandments to the Rulers is that in the exercise of their function as Guardians their principal care must be to watch the mixture of metals in the characters of their children. If one of their own children has traces of bronze or iron in its make-up, they must harden their hearts, assign it its proper value, and degrade it to the ranks of the industrial and agricultural class where it properly belongs: similarly, if a child of this class is born with gold or silver in its nature, they will promote it appropriately to be a Guardian or an Auxiliary (415b-c).[2]

Clearly, therefore, Plato wished to build the foundations of his Kallipolis upon an aristocracy of knowledgeable individuals, unaffected by the advantages or burdens of their birth or wealth. As John Plamenatz has observed:

> Popper is also mistaken when he calls Plato's ideal republic a "caste state." That is precisely what it is not. Where the caste prevails, a man's birth decides his social status and his profession; but in Plato's ideal state anyone, whatever his birth, may be chosen to be educated as a guardian. The ruling class recruit their own members but can take them from any part of the state.[3]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 50-1.

[2] Lee, trans., p. 182.

[3] J. Plamenatz, "The Open Society and its Enemies," The British Journal of Sociology, vol. III, 1952, p. 266.

Again, let me quote F. M. Cornford, one of the most astute Platonic commentators.

> The three classes ... are not hereditary castes, but strata of society into which the citizens of each generation are to be sorted out, solely on the ground of their natural temperament and abilities.[1]

It is true that Plato did not give absolute free choice of selection in his Kallipolis. Rather his preferences were based upon an educational system. The individuals who would eventually govern Plato's ideal state had to be educated in a manner suitable for their great responsibilities. These philosopher-Rulers were recruited from the educational system of the Kallipolis, because of their ability to complete the entire educational program. Thus the education of the citizens of Plato's polis was to be "... valued not for its own sake but because it can and should render a man a fit member of his State."[2] In other words, the need for philosopher-Rulers to cure the problems of mankind was the paramount concern of the Kallipolis. These lovers of wisdom were the product of Plato's educational curriculum. According to Plato, such a need for guardians arose because "good men will not consent to govern for cash or honours (347b)." The rulers of the Kallipolis were to be motivated by a single ambition -- to rule well. Indeed, Plato set up the Academy to train fertile minds for the most difficult of all occupations: that of the just ruler. Plato believed that his long-drawn and detailed educational program (until the age of 50) would produce "only such lovers of truth who will be impervious to temptations to misuse their power for personal gain, for they will value the happiness of a right and rational

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[1] F. M. Cornford, The Unwritten Philosophy and Other Essays (Cambridge: C. U. P., 1950), p. 61.

[2] T. A. Sinclair, A History of Greek Political Thought (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951), p. 144.

life more than any material riches."[1]

Basically, Plato attempted through education to select ruling elites for his Kallipolis, and no one was excluded by birth fron the pursuit of such status. Similarly, how far can anybody attempt even today a legitimate pursuit of political power without a sound education? "Consequently, Plato was primarily interested (as were Machiavelli, Pareto, or Mosca) in the problem of the selection, circulation and stability of the political elite."[2] It was an intellectual elite burdened with several limitations in order that it might not go unchecked. He thus set up several checking-points: the ascetic nature of their lives;[3] the abolition of private property and family;[4] and an elaborate educational machinery for selecting and training the rulers of the polis. Perhaps, he was mistaken in his belief that the eventual guardians would behave in the defined and established norms of his educational program. Such a belief seems to smack of naive optimism by today's standards. And yet, Plato's visit to Syracuse to counsel Dionysius and Dion, the foundation of the Academy, and the activity of his students demonstrates, I believe, Plato's sincerity in the educational system of the Kallipolis. His beliefs might perhaps be hopelessly utopian. But they are not racist or abnormal as his modern enemies would like us to believe. In

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[1] Leslie Stevenson, Seven Theories of Human Nature (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), p. 29.

[2] Meyerhoff, p. 194.

[3] The daily life of the philosopher-Rulers is one of almost intolerable hardship. Indeed, they "are subjected to much severer restraint than any which has ever been adopted by a Christian society." Taylor, Plato, p. 278.

[4] "Plato's communism, unlike most modern socialistic theories, does not aim at securing the material well-being of the whole population. On the contrary, it is designed as a check on the unrestricted power of the rulers." A. M. Adam, Plato: Moral and Political Ideals (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1913), p. 138.

fact, Plato is the first to view education as the key to building a better society. Professor Leslie Stevenson has written:

> His general ideas that human reason can attain knowledge through education, and that such knowledge is not only valuable in itself but can contribute to the wise government and reform of society, are ones with which almost everyone will now agree. Perhaps we do not realize that we owe these conceptions to Plato more than to anyone else.[1]

At this point we should consider the following question: Does Plato accept or reject the institution of slavery in the Kallipolis? For, despite the very slight evidence of either position, Popper covers all bases in his attempt to demonstrate that there will indeed be slaves in the Platonic commonwealth. Thus, Popper argues that the slaves of the Kallipolis are to be both: the third class (δημιουργοὶ -- craftsmen) "whose sole function is to provide for the material needs of the ruling class,"[2] and barbarians (non-Greeks) who are the spoils of war.[3] Plato, however, makes it very clear that the δημιουργοὶ are not to be slaves (δοῦλοι), but, rather, the employers (μισθοδότας) and supporters (τροφεῖας) of the Guardians (463a-b). "But this," Popper claims, "is done only for propagandist reasons;"[4] thus, in effect, implying that the δημιουργοὶ are in fact δοῦλοι: Plato deceptively sugar coating their actual functions with unoffending words.[5] The difficulty of Popper's position is obvious at once: merely the

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[1] Stevenson, p. 34.

[2] Popper, Open Society, p. 47, italics added.

[3] "I agree that Plato opposes in the Republic (469b-470c) the enslavement of Greek prisoners of war; but he goes on (in 471b-c) to encourage that of barbarians by Greeks, and especially by the citizens of his best city." Popper, Open Society, p. 224, also p. 47.

[4] Ibid., p. 47.

[5] See Levinson, pp. 173-6.

physical policing of such a large number of slaves would tax to the limits all the resources of the Guardians. In this sense, Popper in his eagerness to show that Plato was an exponent of slavery, misses the clear distinction that Plato draws among the three classes (547c-d). Plato in his scheme of specialization assigns each class its unique functions and responsibilities. Thus, the philosopher-Rulers are supposed to govern (412c); the Guardians as specialists in the art of war are primarily responsible for the defence of the Kallipolis (374a-e); while the function of the third class -- farmers, craftsmen and traders -- is to provide for the economic needs of the state. Clearly, therefore, there is no evidence that the third class are meant to be slaves, as opposed to free consenting citizens.

Of course, it has been more plausibly argued that in addition to the three existing classes there will be a supporting cast of barbarian slaves. Consequently, the crux of evidence presented by scholars to demonstrate that Plato did not abolish slavery in his ideal state revolves around three basic arguments. Firstly, slavery is entrenched in the status quo of things. Unlike other radical proposals that Plato argues explicitly (i. e., as he does with the equality of the sexes and the abolition of private property and the family), the lot of slaves is hardly mentioned. From this it is deduced that Plato must have accepted slavery since he did not argue against it.[1] Secondly, (and a continuation of the first argument), Plato took servitude of barbarians as granted. Thus, he did not reject slavery because it was, after all, a universally accepted institution. "Plato simply cannot imagine a world without slaves."[2] This evidence, however, is not only

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[1] See Glenn R. Morrow, Plato's Law of Slavery in its Relation to Greek Law (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1939), p. 130; Gregory Vlastos, "Does Slavery Exist in Plato's Republic?," Classical Philology, vol. 63, 1968, pp. 291-92.

[2] Gouldner, p. 243.

purely conjectural, but also hardly convincing. Clearly, each time Plato argues for the "drastic institutional changes"[1] in the Kallipolis, he is introducing (perhaps for the first time)[2] such innovations. Hence the need explicitly to present and to defend these proposals. On the other hand, slavery was an established institution. If Plato argued for its abolition, he would have stated a negative position, whereas his other proposals were positive in the sense that they were promoting change and not running counter to convention. The difference is very subtle, but so is Plato's mind. Plato's silence in this matter is deafening. Saying nothing in this case is, I believe, much more effective than arguing for abolition. Moreover, the purpose of this silence in the Republic becomes clear when compared with the Laws, where Plato describes Magnesia (the second best type of government). Here slavery is categorically defended (776b-778a; 865c; 868a; 878b; 888a; 914a; 936c). Indeed, if Plato took slavery for granted in the Kallipolis, it logically follows that he could have pursued the same line of thought in the Magnesia. But this is apparently not so. Plato, it thus appears, by keeping quiet in the Republic tacitly he states his disapproval of slavery, whereas in the Laws he believes that it is a necessary institution. However, the Kallipolis is Plato's unequivocal preference over the Magnesia -- the "first best" over "second best" polity. Thus it seems plausible that Plato was at heart an abolitionist, and only proposed slavery

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[1] Vlastos, Does Slavery Exist, p. 291.

[2] Hippodamus of Miletus and Phaleas of Chalcedon, two contemporaries of Plato, are reported to have argued for the abolition of private property and the common ownership of the wealth of the polis. Again, the parody of Aristophanes' Ecclesiazusae shows that sexual equality was discussed among the more enlightened circles of Athenian society. But in both cases, it took the Republic forcefully to plead for these innovations.

in the Laws as a necessary evil. Thirdly, Professor Vlastos has effectively demonstrated that in the following passage of the Republic (433d), "Plato speaks of the slave as an element of the population which contributes to the excellence of the polis."[1] Attempting to define the nature of justice (dikaiosyne) Plato writes:

> ἢ τοῦτο μάλιστα ἀγαθὴν αὐτὴν ποιεῖ ἑνὸν καὶ ἐν παιδὶ καὶ ἐν γυναικὶ καὶ δούλῳ καὶ ἐλευθέρῳ καὶ δημιουργῷ καὶ ἄρχοντι καὶ ἀρχομένῳ, ὅτι τὸ αὑτοῦ ἕκαστος εἷς ὢν ἔπραττε καὶ οὐκ ἐπολυπραγμόνει.[2]

The inference of this passage is crystal clear: slaves are to be included in the Kallipolis; and any attempt to reject this connotation at face value would be fruitless. What, then, can we make of this evidence? Professor Levinson's observation that perhaps "Plato in this passage has for the moment forgotten his reference to the ideal city,"[3] has been shown by Vlastos to be merely wishful thinking. Indeed, Vlastos after dealing with Levinson's claim, concludes his paper (considered by many to be the final word on this subject) with the following words:

> And since there is no other ground for discounting the all too plain reference to the slave as instantiating the characteristic virtue of the ideal, it must be reckoned a strong confirmation of our initial presumption that slavery exists in the Republic. Since this would be entitled to acceptance even without any

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[1] Vlastos, Does Slavery Exist, p. 294.

[2] "... it is not this principle abiding in child and woman, in slave and freeman, and artisan, in ruler and ruled, that each minded his own business, one man one work, and was not meddlesome." The Republic of Plato, trans. by A. D. Lindsay (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1935), p. 120.

[3] Levinson, p. 171.

> further support -- for there is no contrary evidence -- the case for the affirmation must be reckoned conclusive.[1]

However, despite Professor Vlastos' learned opinion, I think that this question (433d) has by no means exhausted itself. We must consider other evidence. Let us closely examine the passage in question. Its syntax is revealing. Broken up it reads as follows:

> ... in child and woman
> in slave and freeman
> and artisan
> in ruler and ruled (italics added).

In three of the four phrases Plato is joining opposites with the conjunction Καὶ (and).[2] Apparently, such phraseology heightens the dramatic impact of the actual meaning of what Plato has to say. No one can accuse Plato's language of being boring. Indeed, his language is a most effective weapon to present his ideas. In this case, the purpose of 433d is to define the nature of dikaiosyne in the framework of the Kallipolis. Plato is striving for a universal application of dikaiosyne. All members of the commonwealth are to be covered with this definition. Thus, the purpose of this language: "in slave and freeman and artisan, in ruler and ruled." Effectively the whole community is blanketed with this definition of dikaiosyne. But clearly, this explanation is literally dropped into the text from nowhere. Plato, who painstakingly qualifies everything he writes, in this case, quite carelessly mentions children, women and slaves without any preparatory remarks. Up to this point of the text of the Republic, Plato is describing the occupation and responsibilities of the three classes of

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[1] Vlastos, Does Slavery Exist, p. 295.

[2] Some commentators add Καὶ γεωργῷ (and farmer) after δημιουργῷ (artisan) in the text, noting that the other words go in pairs. However, as James Adam (Republic, p. 240) has shown, the difference between farmer and artisan is insignificant, since both belong to the third class of the Kallipolis.

the Kallipolis -- that is, the philosopher-Rulers, the auxiliaries and the workers. The functions of women and children are not mentioned until later (457c-471d). Of course, the role of slaves is never stated. Consequently, in following the logical presentation of the material, Plato should have written 433d as follows:

> ... it is not this principle abiding in worker, auxiliary, and philosopher-Ruler, that each minded his own business, one man one work, and was not meddlesome.

Undoubtedly, this description is much more accurate and in the spirit of the text than Plato's actual words. But it also pales considerably in front of the original. It lacks colour, drama and immediacy in its importance; it is cold, formal and dull. As such, it could have come from the pen of many other philosophers, but not from that of The Son of Apollo.[1] It is not accidental that the Republic, besides being great philosophy, is great literature. In order to put this thought across as forcefully as possible, Plato in many cases exaggerates the language of the situation. This is so with 433d. Plato in his attempt to make the definition of dikaiosyne as important and central as possible in the design of the Kallipolis, is overstating, quite innocently, his case with dramatic overtones. Unfortunately, in this instance (and it is rather rare), Plato's literary powers betray his social and political thought. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the inclusion of slaves in 433d is merely a slip of the pen. And since this suggestion of 433d is followed up nowhere else in the Republic, it is probable to assume that the institution of slavery does not exist in the Kallipolis.

Indeed, this assumption is given further credence when we consider the

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[1] The high esteem the ancients had for Plato's literary talents is shown in the legend which makes Apollo, the patron deity of literature, the father of Plato. Professor Woodbridge's interpretation of Plato captures the spirit of this legend beautifully.

"need" of slaves in the Kallipolis. If we accept the described responsibilities of the three existing classes at face value, then we must be prepared to explain the following paradox: there is nowhere in the Kallipolis any need for slaves; simply, there is nothing for them to do. Moreover, their inclusion would have been totally counter-productive and suicidal in the livelihood of the Kallipolis. Plato went to great pains to eradicate all excess of wealth from his commonwealth. In his eyes, nothing corrupted more than material affluence. Slaves, by doing the work of the δημιουργοὶ (third class), would have created a vacuum in the construction of the Kallipolis. The δημιουργοὶ, instead of performing their assigned functions, would naturally let the slaves carry them out. And since they were barred from participating in government, what else was there for them to do? Obviously very little. Again, besides the obvious boredom and discontent that such a situation would create among the third class, the real danger of slave manipulation by the δημιουργοὶ as a means of gaining wealth must also be considered. As such, I do not believe that Plato was so blind or naive, as to plant the seeds of the Kallipolis' destruction. It seems, moreover, that Plato was well aware of the problems that slavery was going to create. While describing the degeneration of the Kallipolis because the Guardians (philosopher-Rulers and Auxiliaries) were somewhat lax with the educational system (546c-547a), Plato furthermore explains how timocracy originated from the ideal state (547b-c).

> Once internal strife has started, the two elements philosopher-Rulers and Auxiliaries pull in different directions; the iron and bronze towards private profit and property in land and houses and gold and silver, the other two, the silver and gold, having true riches in their own hearts, towards excellence and the traditional order of things. The violence of their opposition is resolved in a compromise under which they distribute land and houses to private ownership, while the subjects whom they once guarded as freemen and friends [ἐλευθέρους φίλους], and to whom they owed their maintenance, are reduced to the status of serfs and menials, and they

devote themselves to war and holding the population in subjection.[1]

This is indeed a remarkable passage. The δημιουργοί are the "friends" of the Guardians and provide sustenance for the whole community. It is only with the emergence of private property in timocracy, that the third class will no longer willingly nourish the commonwealth. It thus appears that slavery will take root when the Kallipolis begins to deteriorate. Of course, this passage (457b-c) does not clarify the status of the barbarian slaves, since it is only concerned with the fate of the third class outside the environment of the Kallipolis. But it sheds some valuable light on Plato's frame of mind. The vital importance that Plato attaches to friendship (philia) and camaraderie in the construction of the Kallipolis became self-evident at once. In a nutshell, the Kallipolis is a community of friends (philoi). Friends govern over friends:[2] slaves can only injure such an amicable nature where each citizen's task is so carefully calculated. As Professor Levinson has written:

> Plato has reserved the work for his citizens, who must be saved from the idleness, profligacy, and flitting about from one occupation to another, which Plato believed he had seen, and had disliked, at Athens. The presence of slaves in any numbers would have endangered his ideal of a simple, hardy, and wholesome community in which each man does his own work.[3]

From this perspective, then, we can reasonably conclude that the institution of slavery has nothing positive to contribute in Plato's beautiful polis. On the contrary, its inclusion can only ruin an otherwise harmonious whole.

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[1] Lee, trans., p. 362.

[2] "Accordingly, the just man [philosopher-Ruler] who, through his love of wisdom and through his philosophic way of life, preserves the harmony of his soul, is thereby able to evoke the trust of other men. Other men know they can rely on him, and so they show him the love of friends, philia. This love is directed at the wisdom of the just who in turn evokes a striving for similar wisdom in his philoi. Friends are thus united with one another in their common love of wisdom. The just man is loved as a vessel of wisdom, as the carrier of the idea of justice." Horst Hutter, Politics and Friendship (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier U. P., 1978), p. 94.

[3] Levinson, p. 171.

Let us finally consider the most damaging and lingering charge against Plato by his modern enemies. (Oddly enough, however, of all the wrongs attributed to Plato this one has the least factual basis.) Namely, he is accused of expounding the ideology of a "leisure class" which exploits the ignorant masses[1] and keeps them in line by enforcing "ruthless and lawless violence,"[2] while under fine phrases he has managed to hide his "authoritarian reactionary"[3] beliefs. But this is a most improbable rendering: for no matter how hard one tries to strain the meaning of the Republic, it is impossible to find any evidence which points out that the Kallipolis was meant for the material profit of one class of citizens over another; or, for that matter, for any other reason. As such, the bleakest picture one may paint in the relationship between the Guardians and the third class can be stated as follows: the Guardians because they are trained to know what is best for the whole community may deceive the rest of the populace "for their own good," in the same manner a doctor deceives his patients for their ultimate benefit.[4] However, there is not a single line, or even a hint, in the whole of the Republic that subordinates the interests and welfare of one segment of the population to the whims of another. Indeed, besides his statement that rulers and ruled are "friends" (547c), Plato makes it an absolute condition in the construction of the Kallipolis that all three classes must agree (have sophrosyne or temperance) about who ought to rule (430d-432b):

> "And yet again, if there is any city in which the rulers and the ruled are of one mind as to who ought to rule, that condition will be found in this. Don't you think so?"

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[1] See Fite, pp. 128-42.

[2] Popper, Open Society, p. 336.

[3] Winspear, p. 336.

[4] See Bambrough, p. 103.

> "I most emphatically do," he said. "In which class of the citizens, then, will you say the virtue of soberness has its seat when this is their condition? In the rulers or in the ruled?" "In both, I suppose," he said (431e).[1]

Clearly, then, in this passage a most fundamental principle of freedom is explicitly recognized: "government with consent of the governed."[2] In other words, the Kallipolis' Guardians are subjected to the approval of the third class. And, if, for any reason, the philosopher-Rulers should fail in their duties (an indeed rare, but not unimaginable occurence), the masses would have the right to ultimately remove them from office. Moreover, there is not a strand of evidence to indicate that the governing body once found unwanted by the rest of the population would want to stay in power through the use of force.[3] Professor G. C. Field has written:

> It is one of the most inexcusable misrepresentation of Plato's ideal society to picture it as a state in which a large body of unwilling subjects is held down by force by armed rulers. Of course, as in all communities, force might have to be used from time to time against recalcitrants. But it is one of the cardinal features of the ideal state that in all classes there should be, in Plato's phrase [431e], agreement about who should rule and who should be ruled.[4]

To sum up. Of great concern to Plato's modern enemies has been the tendency of the previous commentators to idealize the master. Consequently, they attempt in their books to set the record straight.[5] This industry of

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[1] Plato's Republic, trans. by Paul Shorey, vol. I (London: William Heinemann, 1935), p. 363.

[2] Cornford, trans., p. 122n.

[3] Popper's aim to identify the meaning of the canvas-cleaning passages (501a, 541a), as an attempt by the philosopher-Rulers to "liquidate" the unwanted elements of the Kallipolis (pp. 166-67), is mistaken. The purpose of these passages is purely educational. By a clean slate or canvas, Plato in 501a refers to the intent of the philosophers to dispense their knowledge in all the sectors of the community -- consequently, attempting to reform the character of the existing community in the most virtuous manner. Again, 541a refers to the uncorrupted minds of young children, and how their proper training can establish the Kallipolis in the quickest and easiest way (see p. 51 below).

[4] Field, p. 59.

[5] See Crossman, p. 84; Popper, Open Society, p. 87-9.

"condemn Plato" scholarship has been described best by Gore Vidal, who as a novelist has no political axe to grind.

> One of the laws of physics as yet unrevised by the masters of the second of the two cultures is that in nature there can be no action without reaction. This law also appears to hold true in human nature. Praise Aristides too much for his justice and people will think him unjust. Evoke once too often a vision of golden youths listening to wise old men in the green shade of Academe and someone will snarl that those Athenian youths were a dreary lot taught by self-serving proto-fascists of whom Plato was worst.[1]

Much of the criticism, then, directed against Plato should be taken with a grain of salt. Indeed, a careful analysis of the proposals that today might be offensive to us makes perfect sense when viewed under the conditions for which they were originally proposed. In this sense, Plato's contemporaries who were in the best position to judge the merit of his beliefs kept resoundingly mum about any defects, while at the same time, they nourished in the crucial early days the sapling which Plato planted: that of an academic institution which kept its doors open for nearly nine hundred years; indeed, longer than any other.[2]

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[1] Gore Vidal, Homage to Daniel Shays: Collected Essays 1952-1972 (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), p. 204.

[2] The disappearance of a number of sophistic schools, including that of Isocrates, in the critical academic climate of fourth century Athens, is another example of the high esteem that Plato's school had in the eyes of the ancients.

CHAPTER TWO

The Limits of Politics:
I. The Republic as Spiritual Care
II. The Republic as a City of Speech

> Consequently I weighed the question and was uncertain whether or not to yield to his urging and undertake the journey. What tipped the scales eventually was the thought that if anyone ever was to attempt to realize these principles of law and government, now was the time to try.... Above all, I was ashamed lest I appear to myself as a pure theorist, unwilling to touch any practical task....
> -- Plato (Epistle VII, 328B-C)[1]

While the debate between Plato's modern enemies and his defenders raged concerning the alleged racialist totalitarian bent of his thought, another group of influential scholars challenged the traditional interpretation of Plato's political theory from a totally different angle. This group, led by Professors Voegelin, Strauss and Bloom, denied completely the practical posibility of Plato's ideal polis. The question whether Plato himself took seriously the Kallipolis he described in the Republic, has been a point of dispute since the turn of the century.[2] However, it was not until the historic Hall-Bloom debate in the pages of Political Theory (August 1977) that this contending question reached the limelight of Platonic scholarship. My position in this particular issue will side with the commentators who have accepted the practicability of the Kallipolis. Thus in expounding the

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[1] Plato's Epistles, trans. by Glenn R. Morrow (Rev. ed.; Indianapolis: The Library of Liberal Arts, 1962), pp. 220-1.

[2] See W. K. C. Guthrie, A History of Greek Philosophy, vol. IV (Cambridge: C. U. P., 1975), pp. 483-6.

position of Voegelin (the Republic as spiritual care), and of Strauss-Bloom (the Republic as a city of speech) I shall attempt to identify certain mistaken assumptions in their arguments.

I

Eric Voegelin has been called one of the leading political thinkers of our time, and probably the most influential and provocative historian of this century.[1] His thought is founded upon a particular orientation that leads "to a concept of political order which identifies any political violation of man's humanity, not only as a rebellion against order but as a spiritual disease."[2] Thus his political position is based upon the Platonic passage (Republic 368c-d), where the following claim is made: "... a polis is man written large."[3] In this sense, "The soul of man is a source of truth only when it is oriented toward god through the love of wisdom. In Heraclitus the idea of an order of the soul begins to form which in Plato unfolds into the perennial principle of political science that the right order of the soul through philosophy furnishes the standard for the right order of human society."[4] In other words, as Russell Kirk put it:

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[1] See Russell Kirk, Enemies of the Permanent Things (New Rochelle, New York: Arlington House, 1969), pp. 268-81. "Indeed, at the 1960 convention of the American Political Science Association, a panel was set aside for the discussion of his magnus opus, Order and History. This is a rare distinction for a living political philosopher." Dante Germino, Beyond Ideology: The Revival of Political Theory (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 162.

[2] Gregor Sebba, "The Present State of Political Theory," Polity, vol. I, 1968, p. 267.

[3] Eric Voegelin, The New Science of Politics (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1952), p. 61.

[4] Eric Voegelin, Order and History, vol. II: The World of the Polis (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State U. P., 1957), p. 227.

> The Republic is a zetema, an inquiry, into the real nature of spiritual and social harmony. In Voegelin's phrases, "It should be clear that the inquiry is concerned with the reality of order in soul and society, not with 'ideals'."[1]

Voegelin's clearest interpretation of Plato is found in the third volume of his magnus opus.[2] He begins his analysis of the Republic by claiming that Plato deliberately placed the dialogue in the harbour of Piraeus, some five miles from Athens, where Socrates had gone to offer his prayers to the goddess Bendis, the Thracian equivalent of Artemis. Both the goddess and the harbour represented the contamination of traditional Athenian life. Bendis identified with orgiastic rites[3] was an imported divinity, and the patron of sailors and merchants. The Piraeus lacked any social and political consciousness except as a place where money could be made. Thus "... the spiritual death and disorder of Athens was symbolized by the Piraeus."[4] Furthermore, Voegelin claims that the first word of the Republic, Kateben (I went down), "... sounds the great theme that runs through it to its end."[5] Going down to the Piraeus symbolizes a descent from the aims that true virtue demands; and the whole investigation into justice was an attempt to discover the way up to the absolute righteousness of "... the polis of the Idea."[6]

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[1] Kirk, p. 280.

[2] Eric Voegelin, Order and History, vol. III: Plato and Aristotle (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State U. P., 1957).

[3] W. K. C. Guthrie, Greeks and their Gods (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), p. 43.

[4] Voegelin, Order and History, vol. III, p. 61.

[5] Ibid., p. 52.

[6] Ibid., p. 53.

> From the depth of the Piraeus the way went, not back to the Athens of Marathon, but forward and upward to the polis built by Socrates with his friends in their souls.[1]

According to Voegelin, Plato was not interested in constructing a Kallipolis. Rather, the Republic is a paradigmatic society that demonstrates to men a definite standard of conduct. In turn, this standard may be used to judge the relative defiency of the actual society in which men live. Thus Voegelin points out that Plato's Republic is unfortunately misunderstood if interpreted "as a rational blueprint of an 'ideal constitution'" instead of as an "... intense call for spiritual reform."[2] Russell Kirk writes:

> Voegelin reasons, convincingly, that Plato's intention and accomplishment is to teach obedience to the incarnate Truth; not to preach some dismal set of totalist dogmas, nor yet to bring into being an "ideal" state in his own time, but rather to reveal those principles of order in the soul and order in the commonwealth which make us truly human and which keep the knife from our throats.[3]

Concerning Aristotle's criticism of Plato in the Politics (1260b27-1264b25, 1315b40-1316a27) Voegelin claims that the pupil was attacking certain utopian elements of his master's thought. "Aristotle recognizes the "impossible" element in Plato's speculation... in the lack of consistent reliance on the educative process and in his short circuit into institutional remedies."[4] However, like Plato, Aristotle was also not interested in practical politics. This means that Aristotle's spoudaios (mature man), being the best man in fully actualizing the potential of human nature, is capable of connecting man and society to the bios theoritikos (the life of

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[1] Ibid., italics added.

[2] Voegelin, Order and History, vol. II, p. 187.

[3] Kirk, p. 272.

[4] Voegelin, Order and History, vol. III, p. 323.

reason and contemplation). The bios theoritikos is synonymous with Plato's search for the ultimate reality of the Good; this being the sophon, kalon and agathon (the love of the Divine).[1] The nous (human mind) symbolizes the faculty of attunement to the divine order through the bios theoritikos and the search of the sophon.

> In Aristotle we feel a coolness and severity which stems from the fact, if we may express it drastically, that he has "given up" .... His life is no longer centered in politics, but in his stellar religion and in the bios theoritikos; his soul is fascinated by the grandeur of the new life of the spirit and intellect; and his work, ranging over the realms of being, brings them into the grip of his imperatorial mind. For such a man the accents of the crisis will no longer lie on the misery of Athens; they will lie on the new life that begins with Plato. An epoch is marked but it has the character of a new climax of the intellect, of the nous.[2]

Professor Voegelin's interpretation, however, raises certain questions. Indeed, if we accept the evidence of the Seventh Letter as genuine,[3] we must reasonably conclude that Plato at the time of the writing of the Republic believed that his ideas were realizable. In fact, the following passage from the Seventh Letter reiterates the ideas expressed in the Republic (473c, 487e, 499b, 501e).

> The more I reflected upon what was happening, upon what kind of men were active in politics, and upon the state of our laws and customs, and the older I grew, the more I realized how difficult it is to manage a city's affairs rightly.... and though I did not cease to reflect how an improvement could be brought about in our laws and in the whole constitution, yet I refrained from action, waiting for the proper time. At last I came to the conclusion that all existing states

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[1] Voegelin, The New Science of Politics, pp. 61-70.

[2] Voegelin, Order and History, vol. III, p. 289.

[3] The authenticity of the thirteen letters that Plato is purported to have written, has been a matter of Academic dispute over the years. Indeed, most of them have been shown to be forgeries. However, the most important of them, the Seventh, was accepted as genuine by Cicero and Plutarch. Today it has also been accepted by most Platonic scholars. Moreover, it has been argued that if Plato himself did not write the letter, the person who wrote it was well versed and an eyewitness as regards providing an historically faithful picture. See Walter Hamilton, Plato: Phaedrus and the Seventh and Eighth Letters (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973), pp. 105-8.

> are badly governed... and that the ills of the human race would never end until either those who are sincerely and truly lovers of wisdom come into political power, or the rulers of our cities, by the grace of God, learn true philosophy (Epistle VII, 325c-326b).[1]

Plato did attempt to put his political faith into practice by going to Syracuse at a rather advanced age. He was ashamed, he tells us, to be thought of simply as a theorist (Epistle VII, 328b-c). He was sixty years of age when he was invited to Syracuse to counsel Dion, who was a "... thorough believer in Plato's views about the union of political power with science."[2] As A. E. Taylor points out, Plato had to go to Syracuse because "... it would have been an everlasting dishonour to the Academy if no attempt were made to put his theory into practice when opportunity offered at such a critical juncture."[3] Moreover, Gilbert Ryle claims that the political essence of the Republic (Books II-V) was written for delivery in Syracuse. Hence, the Republic contains "... a positive political message."[4] The fact that Plato failed in Syracuse does not necessarily indicate that his efforts to bring together his political thought with an existing polis went for nought. Again, we must note that students of the Academy took an active part in politics all over Hellas and Plato's lessons in Syracuse were undoubtedly put to good use. Plutarch and Athenaeus recorded the deeds of some of the most influential members of the Academy.[5] In many cases the actions were

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[1] Plato' Epistles, trans. by Morrow, p. 217.

[2] Taylor, Plato, p. 7.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Gilbert Ryle, "Plato," The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, vol. VI, 1967, p. 331.

[5] See Plato's Epistles, trans. by Morrow, p. 143.

undertaken with the blessing of Plato himself.

> And political in its influence the Academy certainly became. It was known in the fourth century as a place where the governing of men was studied scientifically; and we hear of many of its members who took an active part in the political life of Greek states.[1]

An historical investigation which traces the actions of Plato and the other members of the Academy, clearly demonstrates that there was an attempt to implement the Kallipolis as expounded in the Republic. It seems to me, that Voegelin is explaining the Republic in a vacuum. His rendering is not done in an historical context. Rather, he is interpreting Plato's thought only through the dialogues.[2] As I have mentioned before (p. 9), this is a very risky road to take. And how about the evidence of the Epistles? Professor Voegelin (in a curious line of reasoning) claims that the relationship between Plato and Dion was not one of teacher and student undertaking an active pursuit of political reform, but one based upon homosexual eros.[3] Therefore, he dismisses the testimony of the Epistles in less than six pages, in a volume of 268 pages.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] "A study of Plato which confines itself to the letter of the Dialogues... has ended by stripping Plato of his philosophical dignity and interest, has set him before us as a brilliant, but basically frivolous player -- about with half-formed, inconsistent notions and methods, and has failed to explain the persistent, historical sense of him as a deeply engaged thinker, to whom we owe one of the most important, most coherently elaborated, most immensely illuminating ways of regarding the world." J. N. Findlay, Plato: The Written and Unwritten Doctrines (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), p. x.

[3] See Voegelin, Order and History, vol. III, p. 18. Simply, there is no concrete evidence to indicate that Plato was a practising homosexual. Indeed, his asceticism appears to involve the denial of both sexes. Moreover, in the Laws (636a-b) he condemns homosexuality as a highly disruptive influence upon the affairs of the state. For a balanced discussion on this question see Hutter, pp. 84-90.

Further arguments against Voegelin's exposition will be presented in the second part of this chapter, since both Voegelin and Strauss-Bloom minimize Plato's practical politics; only their approaches differ.

II

According to Leo Strauss and Alan Bloom, the Republic conveys a deep ironical streak which renders a meaning that is in opposition to what Plato has actually written. In other words, when Plato "... argues that philosophers should be Kings [he] actually means that philosophers should not be Kings."[1] This means that "unless one reads the Republic as a drama, one does not see that it has a reversal and a discovery, that there is a peripety."[2] Therefore, it is argued that the Republic suggests that the belief in social justice is laughable and suitable for the comic stage.[3] Plato was not interested in building a Kallipolis, but he was rather attempting to demonstrate that the philosopher is not naturally a political ruler. The Kallipolis cannot be an ideal model, because it shows how mistaken is the search for a perfect community in which the philosopher attempts to satisfy himself through serving the public good. "Apparently, by showing the superiority of the private life of contemplation, and emphasizing that the philosopher must be compelled to rule, the Republic actually defends the philosophers from the claims of the polis. Contrary to the usual view,

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[1] Allan Bloom, "Response to Hall," Political Theory, vol. V, August 1977, p. 320.

[2] Ibid., p. 323.

[3] See Arlene W. Saxonhouse, "Comedy in Callipolis: Animal Imagery in the Republic," The American Political Science Review, vol. 72, September 1978. Bloom, "Response to Hall," p. 325.

Plato repudiates the Kallipolis because he prefers happiness to duty."[1] It is thus claimed by Professor Bloom that, "political idealism is the most destructive of human passions," and that "the Republic serves to moderate the extreme passion for political justice by showing the limits of what can be demanded and expected of the city," while at the same time "... it is the greatest critique of political idealism ever written."[2] It is in the Laws, that we must look for Plato's political thought, since the Republic is a city of speech and not of deed.[3]

To maintain their interpretation, Strauss and Bloom dismiss traditional accounts of the Republic which argue that there is no conflict between politics and philosophy. This claim is based on the belief that the excellence of the philosopher-Ruler is the precise excellence that renders him fit to rule Plato's Kallipolis.[4] However, Strauss and Bloom discard such interpretations on the account of a certain passage (519c-520d) in the Republic where there is a reluctance by the philosopher-Ruler to govern. They claim that the philosophers are forced to return to the Cave and rule.

> But it is also clear that the philosophers do not want to be rulers and that they must be compelled. Compulsion is necessary since rhetoric could not deceive philosophers.... In the investigation of the philosophic nature it has by accident, as it were, emerged that philosophers want nothing from the city and that their contemplative activity is perfectly engrossing, leaving neither time nor interest for

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[1] Dale Hall, "The Philosopher and the Cave," Greece and Rome, vol. 25, October 1978, p. 169.

[2] Bloom, "Interpretive Essay," p. 410.

[3] Leo Strauss, The Argument and the Action of Plato's Laws (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 1. "The political result of the inquiry of the Republic is revealed in the Laws, Plato's discussion of an actualizable regime." Bloom, "Response to Hall," p. 327.

[4] See J. C. Davies, "The Philosopher and the Cave," Greece and Rome, vol. 24, April 1977, pp. 23-28. Hall, "The Philosopher and the Cave," pp. 169-173.

> ruling. So, if philosophers are to rule, it must be the city that forces them to do so; and it is the philosophers' interest to keep the knowledge of their kingly skills from the people.[1]

Yet, a close study of the passage in question (519c-520d) reveals in fact, that Plato in using the notion of compulsion (anagkazo) is not actually forcing the philosopher to do anything unnatural. Rather, the compulsion is necessary because it is the duty of the philosopher to help those less fortunate than himself. The philosopher-Ruler is an integral part of a community, which is, after all, based on a functional distribution of work. As Plato himself points out:

> 'The object of our legislation,' I reminded him again, 'is not the special welfare of any particular class in our society, but of the society as a whole; and it uses persuasion or compulsion to unite all citizens and make them share together the benefits which each individually can confer on the community; and its purpose in fostering this attitude is not to leave everyone to please himself, but to make each man a link in the unity of the whole' (519e-520a).[2]

In other words, the Republic does not expose the limits of political power by showing that the philosopher's life of rule in the Kallipolis is in opposition to his self-realization. Plato's theory of education installed an excellence in the philosopher-Rulers that is, in turn, not divorced from the rest of the organic community. If the philosophers resist the call to rule, they act contrary to the laws of the polis. In this sense, the lives of the philosophers will be burdened and incomplete if they do not exercise political authority.[3]

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[1] Bloom, "Interpretive Essay," p. 407.

[2] Lee, trans., pp. 323-4.

[3] "The Philosopher Ruler is the central theme of the Republic; it is the aim of its whole educational curriculum to produce him.... They represent the highest talent, are given the highest training and are put at the disposal of the state. They do not serve the state because they want to, they are philosophers who have seen the supreme vision and would prefer to spend their time in philosophy. But they have a duty to their fellow-men, and that they discharge by doing the work of government for which their training has fitted them; they are a dedicated minority ruling in the interests of all." Ibid., p. 48.

Strauss and Bloom also argue that Plato's suggestion that women can rule equally with men was meant to be ludicrous. The advocacy of sexual equality is dismissed as merely an attempt by Plato to demonstrate that Socrates in "his contest"[1] with Aristophanes produces "a comedy which is more fantastic, more innovative, more comic, and more profound than any work of Aristophanes."[2] In fact, according to Bloom, "book V is preposterous, and Socrates expects to be ridiculed."[3] In other words, Bloom claims that Book V was meant to be a parallel satire on sexual equality to Aristophanes' Ecclesiazusae. Thus the proposals forwarded in Book V are a great travesty and ought not to be taken at face value.[4] On the other hand, it seems more plausible that Plato was in fact responding to the satiric allagations of Aristophanes. As James Adam has pointed out:

> In the fifth book of the Republic Plato touches with serious purpose on nearly all the proposals which Aristophanes had tried to make ridiculous, sometimes expressing himself as if he were the self-nominated champion of the ideal so licentiously burlesqued upon the stage, and even appears to carry the war into the enemy's camp by a vigorous onslaught upon the principles and practice of Athenian comedy (452c).[5]

Clearly, the Republic is an extremely radical work in the manner in which it proposes fundamental changes in the everyday life of the citizens of the polis. "In his formulation of the ideal state, Plato is prepared to question and challenge the most sacred contemporary conventions."[6]

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[1] Bloom, "Interpretive Essay," p. 380.

[2] Ibid., p. 381.

[3] Ibid., p. 380.

[4] Bloom, "Response to Hall," p. 325.

[5] Adam, The Republic of Plato, p. 355, italics added. See also Hall, "Limits of Politics," p. 296; Susan Moller Okin, Women in Western Political Thought (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton U. P., 1979), p. 343.

[6] Okin, p. 29.

Unfortunately, however, in the hands of Professor Bloom the Republic loses its bite as a great political work with its Herculean scheme radically to reconstruct the existing society. In denying Plato's call for sexual equality in the government of the Kallipolis, Bloom is doing a great injustice to one of the most important and radical propositions in the history of Western political theory. Plato's description of the highly trained and educated ruling class in the Republic is the "only place in political philosophy where women are already included on the same terms as men."[1] As he declared in the Republic (451e): " Εἰ ἄρα ταῖς γυναιξὶν ἐπὶ ταὐτὰ χρησόμεθα καὶ τοῖς ἀνδράσι, ταὐτὰ καὶ διδακτέον αὐταῖς."[2] When Plato abolishes private property and the family, he liberates women from the traditional functions of the household, except for the physiological ones of pregnancy and lactation. Women are thus free to pursue the same functions once assigned solely to men.

> Plato's bold suggestion that perhaps there is no difference between the sexes apart from their roles in procreation is possible only because the requirement of unity within the ruling class, and the consequent abolition of private property and the family, entail the abolition of wifehood and the minimization of the role of motherhood.[3]

Moreover, we must take into account the following very crucial passage (452d-e) where Plato claims that only foolish minded people will view his proposals as ridiculous; while, on the other hand, he who "makes goodness the object of his admiration"[4] will not laugh. Bloom, however, who finds

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[1] Ibid., p. 274.

[2] "Then, if women are to have the same duties as men, they must have the same nurture and education? -- Yes." (Jowett's translation).

[3] Okin, p. 40.

[4] Lee, trans., p. 230.

the whole situation "a total innovation"[1] and ludicrous, has a good laugh. But not all have seen the Republic's comic vein. Professor Okin has written: "Book V, then is not a comedy, but Bloom's commentary on it seems to be, and Socrates has the last laugh."[2]

We should finally consider two passages of the Republic (540d-541b; 592a-b) which, at first sight, seem to indicate that the Kallipolis was not meant as a practical possibility. It is my belief, however, that an attentive study of the passages in question would reaffirm the practicability of Plato's ideal state.

At the end of Book Seven, Socrates concludes the selection and curriculum of the Kallipolis' philosopher-Rulers with the reminder that some of them might be women (541c). Continuing, he repeats the claim he previously made at 499b-d and 502c, that his scheme is "not impossible though admittedly difficult (540d)." And when Glaucon quizzes him "how" these male and female philosopher-Rulers can put the Kallipolis in order, Socrates says the following (540e-541a):

> They must send out into the country all citizens who are above ten years old, take over the children, away from the present habits and manners of their parents, and bring them up in their own way under the institutions we have described. Would not that be the quickest and easiest way in which our polity could be established, so as to prosper and be a blessing to any nation in which it might arise?[3]

To this, Glaucon's answer is affirmative. In this case, it is the apparent rustication (εἰς τοὺς ἀγρούς) of anyone over ten years that has raised eyebrows. Professor Guthrie's negative answer to his own question, captures the disbelief scholars have expressed in regard to the feasibility of the

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[1] Bloom, "Interpretive Essay," p. 380. See also Bloom, "Response to Hall," pp. 324, 327.

[2] Okin, p. 308.

[3] Cornford, trans., pp. 256-57.

Platonic Kallipolis. "Can all this really, as many think, have been intended as practical politics?"[1] However, the meaning of this passage is not as terrible as it appears. While this would be "the quickest and easiest way" that the ideal polis can be established, because the philosopher-Rulers will apparently have a clean slate, or canvas (501a) to work with, Plato was the first to realize the eventual difficulty in the implementation of this suggestion. For this reason, he has argued more consistently (Republic 473c, 499b, 501e; Epistle VII 326b) that the Kallipolis will be possible only "if philosophers become rulers, or rulers philosophers." In other words, Plato believed that the training of a young king would be the most practical way to realize his plans. Thus his attempt to transform Dionysus the Younger into a philosopher-Ruler. Undoubtedly, Plato would had prefered the opportunity to train young uncorrupted minds. But even he realized that this was too much to ask from the rest of the population which was, after all, mostly ignorant of the sublety of his theory. Not that Plato wished to physically separate the parents from their children, when he says that the elders have to be sent out into the fields. This is clearly absurd, and Plato would have been amused if it were read this way. Rather, he wants to minimize the influence exercised by parents and society in the development of these young intellects. He hopes that the old manners and customs would play as little a part as possible in the education of the children. Simply, all he asks is that the whole education of children is to be left,at the hands of experts without parental influence. Moreover, he wants to establish the opportunity for everyone to have a sound and equal education -- rich as well as poor. This,

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[1] Guthrie, A History of Greek Philosophy, p. 457. See Leo Strauss, The City and Man (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964), pp. 126-27; Bloom, "Interpretive Essay," p. 409.

of course, was not the case in Plato's time.

> Although desiring that all children of free citizens should be educated, the Athenians left the provision of schools to private enterprise... The fact that fees were paid to the masters of the schools made education a luxury more easily afforded by the well-to-do, but the average Athenian parent was so convinced of its value that most boys passed through the primary stage. Nevertheless we remember the comment of Plato in the Protagoras that 'these who have the means are rich; their children begin education soonest and leave off latest'.[1]

From this point of view, then, the rustication of the elders appears to be an indirect condemnation of Athenian educational policies -- ultimately, it is the institution that Plato wants to banish from the polis and not the users of it.

Besides the above passage (540d-541b), the other place in the Republic where the practicability of the Kallipolis seems to be denied occurs at the end of Book Nine. Here Socrates carries the following conversation with Glaucon:

> I understand, said Glaucon: you mean this commonwealth we have been founding in the realm of discourse; for I think it nowhere exists on earth.
> No, I replied; but perhaps there is a pattern set up in the heavens [οὐρανῷ] for one who desires to see it and, seeing it, to found one in himself. But whether it exists anywhere or even will exist is no matter; for this is the only commonwealth in whose politics he can ever take part (592a-b).[2]

This is a most difficult and "pregnant"[3] passage to interpret. Plato apparently expounds two contradictory positions in the same breath. On the one hand, Plato appears to be saying that "the good city Kallipolis exists only in speech and is a pattern in the sky for those who want to live well."[4] Now, (unlike 470e, 499c, 502c), Plato seems to question the prospects of

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[1] E. B. Castle, Ancient Education and Today (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1961), p. 44.

[2] Cornford, trans., pp. 312-13.

[3] James Adam, p. 370.

[4] Bloom, "Interpretive Essay," p. 426; Voegelin, Order and History, vol. III, p. 92.

realizing the Kallipolis upon earth. Perhaps, his failures in Syracuse put doubts in his mind. On the other hand, however, what are we going to make of the statement at the end of the passage? "For this is the only commonwealth in whose politics he can ever take part: τὰ γὰρ ταύτης μόνης ἂν πράξειεν ἄλλης δὲ οὐδεμιᾶς(592b)." I think that as soon as these doubts entered his mind, Plato cast them away. According to Professor David Grene, even this slight hesitation in Plato's mind has a fundamental part to play in the construction of the Republic. Indeed, Grene's excellent analysis is worth quoting in length.

> Anyone who reads the Republic intelligently will see how clearly its outline reveals Plato's predicament in politics. The book has three phases in its strictly political parts. In the first the model state is described with the clarity and certainty that belongs to Plato's vision of what should be. The second is separated from the first by the decisive question: Can it be made to work? And Plato's answer is: It can. He vehemently asserts the truth and significance of the model even if it should never be born among men, but that there must be a possibility of such realization is essential to him if not to the truth of what he asserts. Because if there is no possibility of it, his one function, that of an artist in the lives of men and women, is negatived.... The whole political story of Plato is here; the picture of the model state, of the trained ruler, the faltering hesitation as how to bring not one but two dreams together first, the theoretical training of a philosopher-Ruler, and second, the implementation of such education in practical politics, the desperation at the thought that failure can be construed as precluding the possibility of success...[1]

The chance of failure, therefore, torments Plato. He never doubted for a moment the possibility that his plans might perhaps fail. But he never shyed away from putting his theory into practice.[2] The Kallipolis, set up as a paradigm in heaven, may seem to be out of human grasp. However, the

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[1] David Grene, Greek Political Theory: The Image of Man in Thucydides and Plato (Chicago: Phoenix Books, 1965), p. 148.

[2] Plato seems to be tormented with the same doubts in the Seventh Letter (328b-c). He says that he was very reluctant at first to go to Syracuse and counsel Dionysus II. But the thought that he might be viewed as a builder of theories hastened his departure. See G. M. A. Grube, Plato's Thought (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), pp. 260-62.

knowledge that it is only in this commonwealth that one can fulfil himself, results in the added effort that makes the Kallipolis possible on earth.

PART TWO: The Kallipolis Restored

CHAPTER THREE

The Nature of the Platonic Dialectic and its Three Stages of Development

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> Dialectic and dialogue overlap, and indeed they are partly the same. It would be handy to think of dialectic simply as the method used by dialogue, but of course it cannot be as easy as that; dialectic is such a massively protean thing that it can scarcely be reduced to any one definition, and certainly Plato, in many passages in which he speaks of it, makes no attempt at such a reduction. At certain points he treats it rather lightly, as a kind of game; but elsewhere he accords it an almost religious respect.
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> -- George Kimball Plochmann[1]

Plato (427-347 B. C.) began writing philosophy in the form of dramatic dialogues sometime before his thirtieth birthday (or soon after the trial and execution of Socrates in 399 B. C.), and it was only with his death, some fifty years later, that this remarkable output finally ended. During this time, Plato's thought was continuously evolving. His ideas were modified and refined to deal with different problems and concerns in his philosophical development. This evolution, or maturity, can be discerned in the chronological sequence of the dialogues. In this respect, the following is a probable order of the Platonic dialogues (being generally grouped into three major stages):[2]

Early: Apology, Crito, Laches, Lysis, Charmides, Euthyphro, Hippias Minor and (?) Major, Protagoras, Gorgias, Ion

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[1] Plochmann, pp. 105-6.

[2] Adopted from Guthrie, A History of Greek Philosophy, p. 50.

Middle: Meno, Phaedo, Republic, Symposium, Phaedrus, Euthydemus, Menexenus, Cratylus

Late: Parmenides, Theaetetus, Sophist, Politicus, Timaeus, Critias, Philebus, Laws.[1]

In the early (Socratic) period, the dialogues deal with problems of inquiry. Socrates by professing personal ignorance, and the need for critical self-examination, goes about trying to discover the definition of some general notions, like piety (Euthyphro), courage (Laches), friendship (Lysis), or temperance (Charmides). Usually most of the early dialogues end inconclusively, because of Socrates' insistence on "not knowing" anything.

Again, discussions of immortality (Phaedo), justice (Republic), love and beauty (Symposium), true rhetoric (Phaedrus) express Plato's speculative or theoretical dialogues (middle period). Here, however, a systematic theory is envisaged, which attempts to demonstrate the effective results of a carefully planned philosophical inquiry. Thus a Good or Ideal society can be realized when the polis is divided into three functional classes of Rulers, Guardians (Protectors), and Producers, each performing their assigned functions without meddling in the affairs of the other two -- such an arrangement will divide properly the national wealth creating a climate of true general welfare that will end class conflict once and for all (Republic).

To the later period belong the dialogues of criticism and appraisal. For example, in the Parmenides, the Theory of Ideas or Forms of the youthful Socrates is criticized by being tested against new facts and subjected to a

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[1] The correct chronology of Plato's dialogues has been a major concern for Plato's commentators. Many claim that their order is the correct one, and consequently they shape their arguments around this order. See Sir David Ross, Plato's Theory of Ideas (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), p. 2, for a number of different chronological orders. Concerning which are original and which are spurious of Plato's dialogues, see Taylor, Plato, pp. 521-55, and Paul Shorey, What Plato Said (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933), pp. 415-44.

number of critical notices raised from different perspectives. Also, in the Laws, the ideas of the Republic are amended and restated in a less radical form, thus bringing forward Plato's final beliefs concerning the actual governing of the polis.

The Platonic dialectic has a similar evolutionary pattern. Plato had something to say about this concept of dialectic all through the dialogues. However, its meaning is not constant from dialogue to dialogue. It was cultivated by Plato to deal with a number of different questions that he had to face during his lifetime. As such, three stages of the Platonic dialectic can be distinguished.[1] The dialogues before the Republic form Plato's early dialectic, or the Socratic elenchus. The Republic presents the middle period (Books VI-VII). Finally, Plato's later dialectic occurs in the dialogues after the Republic, and especially in the logical and epistemological tetralogy which includes the Theaetetus-Parmenides-Sophist-Politicus. For our purposes in this study, the early and middle stages of the dialectic will be analyzed. However, before we examine these first two stages, let us take a look at previous dialectical reasoning.

Socrates' Predecessors

The term dialectic which is derived from the Greek expression διαλεκτικὴ τέχνη literally means the art of conversation. In its development, however, it became something a lot more sophisticated than just simple conversation.

Anaximander of Miletus was the first to expound simple dialectical reasoning. Anaximander, like Thales, had a monist and materialist view of

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[1] See Richard Robinson, Plato's Earlier Dialectic (2nd ed.; Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1953), p. v.

the universe. But, unlike Thales who believed that water was the ultimate cause, Anaximander did not single out one object. Rather, his view was that τὸ ἄπειρον (the infinite) constituted the primary element (ἀρχή). Change was an occurence of conflict between objects. This rather simple dialectical process of conflict was seen by Anaximander as the ultimate cause, which by bringing change would also make up the ἀρχή. Τὸ ἄπειρον since it was an element with no boundaries, unlike water (Thales) or air (Anaximenes), would have made changes and progress on human life more flexible and realistic. Such an indeterminate view of life apparently frees the human mind to search for a number of answers from a single premise. With Anaximander there is no rigidity of thought: the progress of the cosmos is formulated in abstract terms. Moreover, Anaximander, using this dialectical method of conflict, was the first philosopher to make "some attempt at least to answer the question how the world developed out of this primary element."[1]

A more sophisticated method of dialectic, than that of Anaximander's, was developed by Zeno of Elea, who was recognized by Aristotle as the inventor of the dialectic.[2] Aristotle perhaps had Zeno's famous paradoxes in mind since they are excellent examples of dialectic. His paradoxes were an attempt to demonstrate that the pluralism of the Pythagoreans is involved in insoluble difficulties, and that change and motion are impossible, thus confirming the Eleatic claim that change and motion are merely an illusion.

Zeno used the dialectic to refute their hypotheses, thereby defeating the arguments of his opponents. He was able to do that by finding unacceptable

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[1] Frederick Copleston, A History of Philosophy, vol. I, part I (New York: Image Books, 1962), p. 42.

[2] Diogenes Laertius Lives 8, 57.

deductions in these hypotheses. Therefore, it is not possible that Achilles can never overtake the tortoise. Clearly the hypothesis that leads to this conclusion is wrong. He reduces the hypothesis of his adversary to absurdity. Zeno's method relies on the law of formal logic known as modus tollens (if A implies B, and B is false, then A is false). Furthermore, Zeno used the dialectic in an effort to clarify certain philosophical problems and should be viewed as a serious attempt at philosophical investigation.

In contrast to Zeno's dialectic stood the Sophists. Protagoras claimed that he was able to "make the worse argument appear the better." However, this type of negative dialectic had neither philosophical nor logical basis, but was rather a clever rhetorical exercise for monetary gains. Plato would name this form of dialectic as eristic (Sophist 231e) from the Greek word for strife (ἔρις). In the Euthydemus (271d-272a) he criticizes the ability of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus to overthrow with deliberate use of invalid argumentation and sophistical tricks, anything that may be said, whether true or false. However, in the later dialogue the Sophist (225a) he defines eristic as skilled dispute for the sake of victory and thus is milder in criticism than he was in the Euthydemus. Also, in the Meno (75c-d) Plato contrasts dialectic to eristic. The dialecticians are gentle and friendly, and they try to tell the truth.

The Socratic Dialectic

In direct opposition to the Sophists stands Socrates. Instead of arguing for professional reasons,[1] he proclaimed to be only seeking the truth. Socrates' type of dialectic was entitled elenchus.

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[1]The professionalism of the Sophists is vividly depicted by Plato in the Republic. See the rude conduct of Thrasymachus in Book I, 336b.

> The outstanding method in Plato's earlier dialogues is the Socratic elenchus. "Elenchus" in the wider sense means examining a person with regard to a statement he has made, by putting to him questions calling for further statements, in the hope that they will determine the meaning and the truth-value of his first statement. Most often the truth-value expected is falsehood; and so "elenchus" in the narrower sense is a form of cross-examination or refutation.[1]

Thus the Socratic elenchus was a process of cross-examination, in which Socrates, by constantly professing his famous Socratic irony, attempted to make his opponent draw contradictory conclusions from his original thesis. The Socratic dialectic (Socratic irony) was a question and answer method of teaching and learning; realization of ignorance was for Socrates the first step to knowledge. He sought to expose ignorance and thus eliminate error by testing all hypotheses from their starting point. This would be possible by constantly stressing the need for self-examination: "the unexamined life is not worth living;" (Apology 37e) "know thyself." Therefore, the Socratic elenchus is a method of thinking, and language is its instrument.

Professor Robinson, however, claims that the "picture we have so far obtained of the Socratic elenchus is by no means a favorable one."[2] He believes that the elenchus involved persistent hypocrisy. It caused pain to victims and made enemies. And from an historical point of view, Socrates' eristic behaviour explains his trial and condemnation. Indeed, the Socratic elenchus is very much eristic in character. But Plato's mission appears to be of nobler purposes than that of the Sophists. He was not merely interested in making an inferior argument appear the better, but, rather, he was attempting to formulate an ideal city-state. Apparently, before he proceeded to describe the Kallipolis, Plato thought that it was necessary to demolish

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[1] Robinson, Plato's Earlier Dialectic, p. 7. See also Ernst Cassirer, An Essay on Man (New York: Bantam Books, 1970), pp. 6-14, concerning the Socratic dialectic (elenchus), or the Socratic irony.

[2] Robinson, p. 19.

all inferior ideas. This important task was left to the Socratic elenchus with its eristic nature.[1] The destructive spirit of the early dialogues and in Book I of the Republic (or, Thrasymachus)[2] was an essential step. It paved the road for the dialectical reconstruction of society. Its aim was purely cathartic. Before he could build Plato had to destroy. For example, in the Protagoras we have the encounter between Socrates and the famous Sophist after whom the dialogue is named. Here Socrates behaves rather badly; but it is to be expected, since Protagoras by professing to be a Sophist (317b) is his intellectual enemy. He pretends to be forgetful (even though he has an excellent memory) with Protagoras' windiness (334c-335c), but in the same breath he makes the longest speech of the dialogue (352e-358a). Protagoras' entrance in the conversation is pictured as magisterial and bombastic, as he is eagerly seeking the attention of his awed disciples (317e-319a). Furthermore, in the middle of their debate, Socrates abruptly is prepared to leave and put an end to the discussion. In short, as Gregory Vlastos put it, Socrates' "handling of Protagoras is merciless, if not cruel."[3] Clearly, the destructive spirit of the Protagoras is self-evident. The ideas of the Sophist Protagoras (or, that of any other enemy) had to be totally destroyed. "It is as if Plato wished expressly to emphasize that the goal of dialectic in the early dialogues is not the search for truth

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[1] We should note that the Socratic elenchus in the middle and later dialogues loses its irony and destructive bent, while being incorporated into the dialectic.

[2] "Book I of our Republic ... seems to be the torso of what, if finished, would have been the Thrasymachus, an eristic dialogue of the same genre as the Protagoras and Gorgias." Gilbert Ryle, Plato's Progress (Cambridge: C. U. P., 1966), p. 193.

[3] Gregory Vlastos, ed., Plato's Protagoras (Indianapolis: The Library of Liberal Arts, 1956), p. xxiv.

but the annihilation of the enemy."[1]

Again, in the Ion, Socrates demonstrates that poets and rhapsodists are merely "interpreters of interpreters (535e)." In fact, poetry is not an art but an inspiration. Poets do not know what is Ideal, and thus cannot become the educators of the youth. Similarly, in the Republic (595a-608b), the poets are excluded from the Kallipolis, because poetry is only an imitation of life (mimesis). Poetry is merely a representation of a likeness of reality. Moreover, poetry tells us nothing about life, or how we are to reach the Idea of the Good, and for this reason it has absolutely no value in the Kallipolis. Henceforth, from this example we can see that the Socratic dialogue (Ion) identified the weakness of poetical education, while the Republic in taking the next logical step excluded mimesis from the educational program of the Kallipolis. "Thus elenchus changes into dialectic, the negative into the positive, pedagogy into discovery, morality into science."[2] An intellectual path is cleared from the jungle of ἀνομία (lawessness or anarchy)[3] that gripped Athens; being the fault of democracy, which like a bazaar (παντοπώλιον Rep. 557d), catered to all wants, thus promoting "social disunity,"[4] the mortal enemy of existing Greek society. And, of course, Plato did not suffer from anorexia. The Kallipolis was his answer and remedy, while dialectic was the vehicle of the therapy.

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[1] Lev Shestov, Potestas Clavium; trans. be Bernard Martin (Chicago: Gateway Edition, 1970), p. 117.

[2] Robinson, Plato's Earlier Dialectic, p. 19.

[3] Republic 496d, 575a

[4] Gouldner, p. 206.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Dialectic in Plato's Republic

> Dialectic, then, as you will agree, is the coping-stone of the sciences, and is set over them; no other science can be placed higher -- the nature of knowledge can no further go? I agree, he said.
>
> -- Plato Rep. 534e (Jowett's translation)

The Republic was Plato's response to Athenian democratic freedoms that fostered anarchistic liberty, or anomia. The citizens under a democratic regime, he bitterly complains, "in their determination to have no master ... disregard all laws, written or unwritten (Republic 564)."[1] It was the aim of the early dialogues to diagnose man's disorders, and subsequently through the implementation of the elenchus to destroy the sickness of anomia, the main cause of social disunity. The Republic, on the other hand, has a wholly positive outlook. Here Plato prescribes his therapy: his Kallipolis. "Plato aims to have individual lives, and the communities in which they are lived, integrated by the governance of reason and by the surrogate of reason, law."[2] Reason and law (νόμος) as opposed to lawessness (ἀνομία) will lead the philosopher-Ruler to the Idea of the Good through the Platonic Forms -- "the ideals or patterns which have a real existence independent of our minds."[3] It will be the task of an extensive system of education (lasting

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[1] Lee, trans., p. 384.

[2] Gouldner, pp. 259-60.

[3] Cornford, trans., p. 176.

fifty tears) that will eventually bestow upon a man or a woman the vision of the Good, a necessary and sufficient provision for ruling wisely and justly. For Plato, therefore, the aims of education are three: to lead the candidate to the knowledge of the Good (which is the highest Form); to formulate this knowledge as the pattern for the right ordering in society; and to prepare these individuals for absolute political authority.[1] Accordingly, it is only through the method of dialectic that the Forms can be realized. Socrates is quite emphatic on this.

> This now, Glaucon, I said, is the law which dialectic fulfills. The law is intelligible, and the power of sight would be imitating it when we described it as attempting to look at actual living creatures, then at the actual stars, and finally at the actual sun. So whenever one tries through dialectic, and without any help from the senses but by means of reason, to set out to find each true reality and does not give up before apprehending the Good itself with reason alone, one reaches the final goal of the intelligible as the prisoner escaping from the cave reached the final goal of the visible. -- That is altogether so (532a-b).[2]

The main passages of dialectic in the Republic are the Simile of the Good and the Sun (Book VI, 502c-509c), the Analogy of the Divided Line (Book VI, 509d-511e), the Allegory of the Cave (Book VII, 531d-535a). The Similes of the Sun, the Divided Line and the Cave run consecutively, and we are told by Plato to connect these as a single passage (517b: Every feature in this parable, my dear Glaucon, is meant to fit our earlier analysis. The

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[1] "The possibility of the existence of the just state or the just man depends on the condition that the philosopher will be king in the state and that reason will reign in the soul. The philosopher and reason provide the new foundation for society and man because they reflect the image of reality. ... Behind the philosopher and behind reason stands unchanging reality and knowledge; knowledge and reality can only be reached through an intensive system of education culminating in the study of dialectic." N. F. Cantor and P. L. Klein, eds., Ancient Thought: Plato and Aristotle (Waltham, Mass.: Blaisdell Publishing Company, 1969), p. 10.

[2] Grube, trans., p. 183.

prison dwelling corresponds to the region revealed to us through the sense of sight, and the fire-light within it to the power of the Sun).[1] Therefore, the break which occurs with the end of the Sixth Book is, as Cornford says, "an accidental expedient to ancient book-production, having little more to do with the structure of the argument than the division of every Victorian novel into three volumes had to do with the structure of the stories."[2] Moreover, the section on Dialectic was meant as a summary of the Similes of the Sun, Cave, and Line (533e: It will therefore be enough, I said, as before, to call the first section knowledge, the second reasoning, the third belief, and the fourth imagination...).[3] It appears that Plato wished the dialectical passages in the Republic to be read as a whole, in order for the reader to follow the dialectic in an undivided condition.

502c-509c: The Idea of the Good and the Simile of the Sun

According to Plato, the Idea of the Good is the ultimate aim of knowledge (505a: Ἐπεὶ ὅτι γε ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα μέγιστον μάθημα),[4] and it is the final object for the education of the philosopher-Ruler. Plato elaborates:

> The Good, then, is the end of all endeavour, the object on which every heart is set, whose existence it divines, though it finds it difficult to grasp just what it is; and because it can't handle it with the same assurance as other things it misses any value those other things have (505e).[5]

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[1] Cornford, trans., p. 231.

[2] Ibid., p. v.

[3] Grube, trans., p. 185.

[4] "... the form of the Good is the greatest object of study." Grube, trans., p. 159.

[5] Lee, trans., p. 304.

It is also the most difficult quality for the Ruler to attain. Here, however, Plato introduces a discipline he calls dialectic and it will be "the function of 'dialectic' to lead directly to the vision of the 'good'."[1]

Since the Idea of the Good is the end of all knowing, Socrates is pressed by Glaucon to give his own view of this very important study. However, Socrates declines to give a direct answer and instead attempts to explain it in the format of a simile. The Simile of the Sun is a comparison of the Good with the sun. Plato uses the Sun in order to clarify the four factors of the "visible" world, namely: the Sun (A) and its light (B), the eye (C) and its sight (D), with the four factors of the "intelligible" world, namely: the Good (A) and its truth (B), the mind (C) and its knowledge (D). In other words, there can be no sight without light. The eye depends on the source of light, which is the sun. Thence, the Sun is the physical eye, just as the Idea of the Good is the mind's eye. The Idea of the Good is thus to the intellect what light (the Sun) is to the visible world (508c). Moreover, the mind's eye (knowledge) will not see the light (truth) unless the sun (Good) will inspire all learning. Consequently, just as the sun is visible, the Good is perfectly knowable (534b-c).

509d-511e: The Divided Line or the Four Stages of Education

Plato begins the section of the Divided Line by giving a brief summary of conclusions from the Simile of the Sun. Thus he confirms that the Sun was meant to be an introduction to the Line. In this case, a "simple two-fold division" (Intelligible and Visible worlds) is elaborated "into a fourfold one."[2] Since the early education of the philosopher-Ruler was

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[1] Taylor, Plato, p. 285.

[2] Guthrie, A History of Greek Philosophy, p. 508.

mainly confined to the visible world, it was now proper time for higher intellectual knowledge that was "to detach the mind from appearances and individuals and to carry it across the boundary between the two worlds and all the way beyond to the vision of the Good."[1] The Divided Line can be thus drawn to look something like this:

noesis	A	
		epistēmē (A+B) Knowledge
		INTELLIGIBLE WORLD
dianoia	B	
pistis	C	doxa (C+D) Opinion
		VISIBLE OR PHYSICAL WORLD
eikasia	D	

The lowest stage of knowledge is D, and is described by Plato as (509e: one of the two sections in the visible world that will stand for images (εἰκόνες). By images I mean first shadows, and then reflections in water or in close-grained, polished surfaces, and everything of that kind).[2] Εἰκασία (D), the visible world, always changing and approximate, is perceived by the human senses through imaging, picturing and conjecture. Thus moral and political values are accepted uncritically. If, for example, a Sophist with fancy rhetoric makes the worse argument appear the better,

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[1] Cornford, trans., p. 216.

[2] Ibid., p. 224.

and thus convinces his audience, then the minds of these individuals are in a state of eikasia. Πίστις or belief (C) is described as (510a: the second section that stands for the actual things of which the first are likenesses, the living creatures about us and all the works of nature or of human hands).[1] Here an individual makes direct contact with his faculties upon the objects of his perception. However, by judging these empirical observations as true reality (pistis), he fails to understand that he is experiencing inferior copies of the perfect domain of the Forms. And yet, "he is not so badly off as the dreamer who thinks that the images that he sees are the real world (εἰκασία), but he has not got ἐπιστήμη: he is devoid of real scientific knowledge."[2] Consequently, an individual may have correct political and moral opinions, but he does so without proper understanding (506c).

Thus eikasia and pistis are the lower mental states of cognition in the upward development of the human mind on its difficult journey from ignorance to knowledge. These two stages belong to the visible world, or to the realm of δόξα (opinion). The intelligible world of the line is the realm of ἐπιστήμη (knowledge), which is furthermore subdivided into the mental states of διανοία (B) and νόησις (A). In the development from doxa to epistēmē "cognizing moves from the observable to the invisible, from images to symbols, from perception to conception, from sense to thought."[3]

It would be the responsibility of higher education to train the intellect to comprehend epistēmē; or "the world of knowledge" which is eternal and

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Copleston, p. 178.

[3] W. S. Sahakian and M. L. Sahakian, Plato (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1977), p. 150.

absolute, unlike the lower stage of the line (doxa). Stage B, then, called by Plato dianoia, belongs to the intelligible realm and consists of mathematical objects that involve the intellect in abstract thought and understanding by accepting hypotheses without criticizing them (510b: In one sub-section (B) the mind uses the originals of the visible order in their turn as images, and has to base its inquiries on assumptions and proceed from them not to a first principle but to a conclusion).[1] Because dianoia recognizes the Forms through the sensible particulars found in doxa ("the many transient and imperfect copies of reality"),[2] it cannot yet grasp the perfect beauty of justice and goodness (The Idea of the Good). This is the task of the highest stage of the line, noesis (dialectic). Therefore, noesis (510b: moves from assumption to a first principle which involves no assumption, without the images used in the other sub-section dianoia , but pursuing its inquiry solely by and through forms themselves).[3] With noesis, then, the intellect uses the Forms alone, without the need of either images or assumptions (hypotheses). Noesis (A) is the highest state of knowledge. It is higher reason. It is the first principle (The Idea of the Good). Dialectic or noesis is the study of Forms without unproved hypotheses; through question and answer it involves philosophical self-examination until the ultimate vision of the truth is seen. Apparently, it is only through perfect knowledge that the intellect can arrive at perfect reality; at noesis or Idea of the Good (ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα, Rep. 505a, 508e, 517b). But once at this state of perfect awareness, one is now ready and prepared to dispense

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[1] Lee, trans., p. 313.

[2] Guthrie, A History of Greek Philosophy, p. 510.

[3] Lee, trans., p. 313.

his intelligence in a manner essential to the welfare of the whole Kallipolis.[1] In other words, this ascent of knowledge (being the education of the philosopher-Ruler), from eikasia, to pistis, to dianoia, to noesis, does not only have an epistemological and methodological character, but also an ontological one. Hence the intellectual journey undertaken in the Simile of the Divided Line does not only teach correct knowledge, but also correct action.

> Plato's interest in the epistemological ascent is thus no mere academic or narrowly critical interest: he is concerned with the conduct of life, tendence of the soul and with the good of the State. The man who does not realize the true good of man will not, and cannot, lead the truly good human life, and the state statesman who does not realize the true good of the State, who does not view political life in the light of eternal principles, will bring ruin on his people.[2]

Indeed, the significance of the Line as regards the education of the philosopher-Ruler is magnificently reiterated in the Allegory of the Cave.

514a-521b: The Allegory of the Cave

The underlying meaning of the Cave is as follows: The human senses are our prison, and the ascent from the lowest level of education (the Line), which is eikasia (illusion) to the highest noesis (dialectic), through sense perception is very difficult. Those very few (philosopher-Rulers) that are able to make the climb, and who have seen the blissful vision, which represents the Idea of the Good, the highest Form, "the cause of whatever is

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[1] "Not only does one arrive at the Good through knowledge, but the Platonic Idea, Good, is the source of knowledge as well as knowability and also serves to account for the world of Ideas. Consequently, Ideas are not only known owing to their relation to the Good, but exist by virtue of the Idea of the Good. Even the virtues acquire their value and definition by their relation to the Good, life's summum bonum. Wisdom is the knowledge of Good, whereas courage, temperance, and justice serve in the pursuit of it. Virtues acquire excellence by their being good." Sahakian, p. 152.

[2] Copleston, pp. 186-7.

right and good ..., and the parent of intelligence and truth (517c)," will become very unwilling to go back to the shadows of eikasia and pistis. In other words, the individual who completed the four stages of education of the line will know better than to regress back into his original state of mind, before he made the climb. And yet, Plato ἀναγκαίθαι the philosopher-Rulers to return back to the cave in order to dispense his acquired knowledge to the uneducated masses, which, after all, lack the essential understanding of the forms. Of course, this is their primary responsibility and duty. "Even the philosopher-king who has grasped the eternal verities reaches this stage not only for contemplation but to return to the shadows of the cave and insure that ideas are translated into action in the just state."[1] Plato is hoping that the philosopher-Ruler, having the Forms for his contemplation, will return to the cave to govern with a sense of responsibility, if there is to be justice in the Kallipolis. For the Ruler will not guide for personal advantage, but rather, because of the stern necessity to do his or her appointed duty. Moreover, this very unwillingness to govern, is presented by Plato as the chief qualification. In fact, following Pittacus' dictum,[2] Plato claims that it is a measure of a just polis if its rulers are reluctant to serve, just as it is a measure of corruption and decadence if they are too happy to govern (520d).

Plato's belief in the importance of education is very evident in the Similes of the Line and Cave. In both, an ascent of the intellect from

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[1] R. M. Millard, "Vocation Reconsidered: Toward a Philosophy of Postsecondary Education," in J. Howie and T. O. Buford, eds., Contemporary Studies in Philosophical Idealism (Cape Cod, Mass.: Claude Stark & Co., 1975), pp. 247-8.

[2] The best state is that in which bad men are not allowed to hold office, and good men are not allowed to refuse office.

ignorance to knowledge is presented. This progressive evolution of education, "a first priority (424c)" in the organization of the Kallipolis, is neatly stated by Father Frederick Copleston.

> Hence his insistence on the great importance of education, whereby the young may be brought gradually to behold eternal and absolute truths and values, and so saved from passing their lives in the shadow-world of error, falsehood, prejudice, sophistical persuasion, blindness to true values, etc. This education is of primary importance in the case of those who are to be statesmen. Statesmen and rulers will be blind leaders of the blind, if they dwell in the spheres of εἰκασία or πίστις, and the wrecking of the ship of state is a more terrible thing than the wreck of anyone's individual barque.[1]

531d-534e: Dialectic

The summary and conclusion of the Similes of the Sun, the Line, and the Cave is given by Plato in a section of the Republic (531d-534e), usually entitled "Dialectic."[2] Plato recommends that the studies (sciences) of mathematics, music and astronomy be observed because they are important as an introduction to dialectic. "In this way they will form the proper propaedeutic to dialectic, which aims directly at a knowledge of beauty and knowledge."[3] However, all these sciences rest and rely on hypotheses without giving grounds for them, and thus do not deserve the title "true sciences" (533b-c: There remain geometry and those other allied studies which, as we said, do in some measure apprehend reality; but we observe that they cannot yield anything clearer than a dream-like vision of the real so long as they leave the assumptions they employ unquestioned and can give no account

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[1] Copleston, p. 186.

[2] Here I follow the excellent interpretation presented by Wincenty Lutoslawski, The Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic (London: Longmans, Gree, and Co., 1897), pp. 302-3.

[3] Guthrie, A History of Greek Philosophy, p. 524.

of them).[1] And since true science cannot be based on unknown first principles, and since "such apparent sciences rest on mutual agreement, ... only Dialectic rises above all hypothetical beginnings ... up to the absolute principle to which it gives the highest stability."[2] (533c: Dialectic, in fact, is the only procedure which proceeds by the destruction [ἀναιρούσα] of assumptions to the very first principle, so as to give itself a firm base).[3] The dialectician is the man (or woman), who has reached the highest stage of the Line (noesis). He is the person who haunts the nature of each thing, and since he is capable of giving an account of himself and others, he commands reason and intelligence over difficult situations and matters, just like any good and just Ruler (534b: And you also call a dialectician the man who can give a reasoned account of the reality of each thing? To the man who can give no such account, either to himself or another, you will to that extent deny knowledge of his subject? -- How could I say he had it?).[4] In other words, the philosopher-Ruler, because of his educational curriculum, must give and receive an account of the things that must be understood. Such knowledge only ends with the acquisition of the Idea of the Good, because the Ruler cannot be said to have this knowledge unless he can give an account of it, and an account that distinguishes it from all other things. One who is unable to give such account, merely (because he does not know any better) gives opinions about images of the Good. Thus the dialectician by the light of reason only, and without any assistance of the

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[1] Cornford, trans., p. 248.

[2] Lutoslawski, p. 302.

[3] Lee, trans., p. 344.

[4] Grube, trans., p. 185.

senses, finally perseveres the educational program until through pure intelligence (dialectic I) he arrives at the perception of the absolute Good (dialectic II).[1]

Henceforth, the dual significance of the dialectic in the Republic. This is, indeed, a very complex and difficult problem, and only Professor Cornford's brilliant work has shed some light on it.[2] Apparently, Plato's Rulers wear two hats: that of a Philosopher and that of a Statesman. On the one hand, as a Philosopher he is responsible for researching and striving after the Good. Once he has seen the Good, he will have nous or noesis (534b) and will be ready to go down to the shadows of the Cave. Here he will not only be able to give an account of the supreme form (the Good), but he will be also capable of defining the nature of every single thing including "all the subordinate moral Ideas, 'descending through Ideas to Ideas and ending with Ideas' (511c)."[3] Consequently, the results of the Philosopher's research, if they are ever presented in written form,[4] "... would amount to a complete system of moral philosophy, securely deduced from the definition of Goodness."[5] Thus it will be the aim of the Philosopher

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[1] Republic 532a-b.

[2] F. M. Cornford, "Mathematics and Dialectic in the Republic VI-VII," in R. E. Allen, ed., Studies in Plato's Metaphysics (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), pp. 61-95. Reprinted from Mind (1932), pp. 38-52 and 173-90.

[3] Cornford, "Mathematics and Dialectic," p. 88.

[4] Socrates never really gives a satisfactory explanation of the Good in the Republic. This is because neither Glaucon nor the others have been so educated. Moreover, in the Seventh Epistle, Plato claims that he would never commit his deepest thoughts into words, but, rather, "this knowledge ... after long-continued intercourse between teacher and pupil, in joint pursuit of the subject, suddenly, like light flashing forth when a fire is kindled, it is born in the soul and straightway nourishes itself (341c-d)." Morrow, trans., Epistles, p. 237.

[5] Cornford, "Mathematics and Dialectic," p. 88.

and the goal of research (φιλοσοφία) to define and establish the nature of the Good (dialectic I). On the other hand, the Ruler as a Statesman has a purely practical function. After spending fifteen years in the Cave in subordinate training (i. e. serving in military and civil posts in order to gain practical experience and judge his or her competency to withstand the distractions and lures of office), the Ruler, at the age if fifty, is brought face to face with the final vision of the Good (dialectic II). He will thus be responsible for the education of others to succed him; and in turn he will dispense knowledge, and rule as a matter of duty. Plato is quite explicit about this:

> And when they are fifty, those who have come through all our practical and intellectual tests with distinction must be brought to their final trial, and made to see the good itself, which they can take as a pattern for ordering their own life as well as that of society and the individual. For the rest of their lives they will spend the bulk of their time in philosophy [dialectic I], but when their turn comes they will, in rotation, turn to the weary business of politics and, for the sake of society, do their duty as Rulers, not for the honor they get by it but as a matter of necessity. And so, when they have brought up successors like themselves to take their place as Guardians, they will depart to the islands of the blest (540a-b).[1]

Accordingly, I have argued that Plato's use of the dialectic in the Republic has a dual significance. In both cases the philosopher-Ruler is the benefector of Plato's attention. In the first case, we see that the Similes of the Sun, Line and Cave deal with the ascent of human mind from ignorance to knowledge. But this progress of knowledge is not at all easy: it requires great effort and mental discipline. In other words, a dialectical-epistemological (methodological) education is needed; one that teaches correct knowledge, and defines the Idea of the Good at the end of

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[1] Lee, trans., p. 354. "As statesman, he will legislate, like Moses when he came down from the vision on Sinai bearing the tables of the Law. Using the nature of the Good as a 'pattern,' he will create order (κοσμεῖν) in his city." Cornford, "Mathematics and Dialectic," pp. 90-1.

the educational programme. As such, this "dialectic is the checking of the stream of thought by the necessity of securing the understanding and assent of an intelligent interlocutor at every step, and the habit of noting all relevant distinctions, divisions, and ambiguities, in ideas and terms."[1] When this vision of the Good is defined, the philosopher-Ruler is motivated to legislate and rule: because in its ontological-paradigmatic reality dialectic teaches correct action and activity (second case). Thus the Philosopher-Ruler-Statesman not only understands the Good, but he is also in the lofty position of being able to dispense his knowledge in his city by using the nature of the Good as a pattern (παράδειγμα) that will create order: indeed, it will create the Kallipolis.

Once this stage of awareness is reached, the difference between the two aspects of dialectic hardly matters. Now they become inseparable. One is the right hand of the other; one cannot do without the other. In this sense, only dialectical thought takes away in abstract forms assumptions by reasoning and by asking questions and by answering them, in search of the highest object of knowledge, which is "The Idea of the Good" at the end of the intellectual world. Dialectic is the study of pure thought, the noesis of the Divided Line; its aim is the vision of the good and the just. It is the final step in the difficult ascent from the Cave, when the eye can look at the Sun itself without being blinded by its brilliance. Dialectics supply a synoptic view of all sciences, knowledge and reality in one united procedure. The Platonic dialectic is the coping-stone of all the sciences (534e). It is the intellectual weapon that would enable the philosopher-Ruler to govern in a just manner over the citizens and affairs of the Kallipolis.

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[1] Shorey, trans., p. 201n.

CHAPTER FIVE

Dialectic as Therapy: The Platonic Kallipolis

> The Function of epistēmē and of the dialectic through which it is obtained is not, however, simply awareness for its own sake, in the sense of a mere apprehension of the truth; it is also concerned with changing behaviour; it is a practically effective knowledge, a knowledge manifested in everyday behaviour and choice.
>
> -- Alvin W. Gouldner[1]

> One might say that two unshakeable convictions determine Plato's thinking; one, that the philosopher seeks and finds what is absolute and permanent behind appearances, the other, that the philosopher, just because he grasps the absolute, should be at the head of affairs in the community.
>
> -- Raphael Demos[2]

It has been demonstrated by Sir Ernest Barker that Western political thought proper began with the Greeks.[3] Unlike the Near Eastern civilizations which made God the single reference of all matters, the Greeks not satisfied with these mythological and cosmocentric explanations of the universe, attempted to explain the cosmos that surrounded them in a manner that included man's faculties in their investigation. "Instead of projecting themselves into the sphere of religion, like the peoples of India and Judea, instead of taking this world on trust, and seeing it by faith, the Greeks took their their stand in the realm of thought, and daring to wonder about things

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[1] Gouldner, p. 272.

[2] Raphael Demos, ed., Plato: Selections (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927), p. vi.

[3] See Sir Ernest Barker The Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle (New York: Dover Publications, 1959, first published in 1906).

visible, they attempted to conceive of the world in the light of reason."[1] The difference of how the Greeks and other Mediterranean civilizations viewed their existence is seen in their literature. Eastern thought was thoroughly under the influence of religion and the god-king. "Man is the shadow of a god, and a slave is the shadow of man; but the king is the mirror of a god,"[2] is the saying of a Mesopotamian proverb. Indeed, the laws of Hammurapi were the laws of God, to be blindly obeyed and never questioned by mortal man. Again, the justice forwarded in the Old Testament of the Hebrews was the justice of Jehovah and not of Man. Compare this with the very inception of Greek literature: The Iliad of Homer. Here gods and mortals mated and produced children. And in a feat quite unthinkable in a cosmocentric order, the goddess Aphroditi and Ares, the god of war (nevertheless), would be wounded by the mortal Diomedes (Iliad, Book V).[3] The limited powers of the Olympians runs all through the literature of the Greeks. This also holds true in Plato. It is Reason and not Zeus that controls the destiny of man. In the Critias (109a-110c), "Plato amplifies and reinterprets the famous doctrine of Anaxagoras: 'All things were confounded together, when Reason came and introduced distinction and order'."[4] A further limitation of the

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[1] Barker, p. 1.

[2] Cited in Chester G. Starr, Early Man (New York: Oxford U. P., 1973), p. 136.

[3] "Moreover, the Olympian gods, though they were manifest in nature, had not made universe and could not dispense of man as their creature with the same unquestioned right of ownership which the ancient Near Eastern gods exercised." Henri Frankfort et al., Before Philosophy (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1949), p. 249.

[4] F. M. Cornford, From Religion to Philosophy (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1957), p. 36. See Arnold J. Toynbee, Hellenism: The History of a Civilization (London: Oxford U. P., p. 1959), pp. 1-15, for an excellent succinct exposition of Hellenic Humanism.

Olympian Gods is presented in Plato's treatment of the Myth of Er (Rep. 613e-6216). When the souls are ready for reincarnation and stand in front of Lachesis in order to choose their new lives, they are told that in their eventual choise (571e: The blame is his who chooses; Heaven is blameless).[1] Their destiny is upon their own hands. No godly power will interfere. In other words, as Professor Cornford put it:

> All this imagery is, of course, mythical and symbolic. The underlying doctrine is that in human life there is an element of necessity or chance, but also an element of free choice, which makes us, and not Heaven, responsible for the good and evil in our lives.[2]

Having gotten rid of the shadow of Heavenly direction, the Greeks, and Plato in particular,[3] proceed to explain human behaviour in a rational and constructive manner (cf. pp. 64-77 above). As such, the Greek search to find the right order of life led to the inherent connection of political thought with ethics. As Professor Barker stated: "The πόλις was an ethical society; and political science, as the science of such society, became in the hands of Greeks particularly and predominantly ethical."[4] Barker goes on to claim that Plato was a practical political thinker writing enchiridions for statesmen, and that the Republic was one of his chief works expounding his politics.

> There is always this practical bent in Greek political thought. The treatises in which it issues are meant, like Machiavelli's Prince, as manuals for the statesman. Particularly this is the case with Plato. True to the mind of his master Socrates, he ever made it the aim of his knowledge that it should issue in action.... He even attempted to translate his philosophy into action himself, or at any rate to induce Dionysius to realize the hopes of the Republic.[5]

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[1] Cornford, trans., p. 346.

[2] Ibid., p. 342.

[3] "... foremost in Plato's mind was the ambition to provide a new rational foundation for human conduct and the organization of society." Cantor and Klein, p. 7.

[4] Barker, p. 5.

[5] Ibid., p. 9.

It would have been indeed difficult for Plato to disassociate himself from the politics of his time. From both sides of his family there was active participation in the political life of Athens. And no doubt, as we learn from the Seventh Epistle (324b-326b), he had ambitions to enter public life. It would have been a very natural step to take. The upbringing of most young Athenian citizens (Plato, of course, included), was such, that nearly all were "politically conscious from childhood onwards ... [while] the highest virtue for a grown man was the ability to govern."[1] However, something went wrong. Plato became disheartened, first by the rule of the Thirty, and later with the most shameless treatment of Socrates by the restored democracy. Greatly discouraged, he withdrew from active Athenian politics never to re-enter. But this does not mean that he lost complete interest. If the road to political power was closed in Athens, the rest of the Hellenic world was wide open. Hence Plato set up the Academy to train young minds to comprehend, and in turn dispense their knowledge and wisdom justly. Moreover, it is reasonable to assume that the curriculum of the Academy mirrored the one found in the Republic.[2] But what good would it do if the teacher himself did not attempt to put his theories into practice? For this reason, "Plato was not content to preach his doctrine in the Republic; he practised it ... in his own life."[3] Therefore, despite his advanced age and the dangers of such a long trip, he went to Syracuse to put his belief into practice. Undoubtedly, he would have prefered to stay in Athens, "but Athens was not the only place where a patriotic Greek could

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[1] Pamela M. Huby, Greek Ethics (London: Macmillan, 1967), pp. 5-6.

[2] See Guthrie, A History of Greek Philosophy, p. 22.

[3] Taylor, Plato, p. 2.

do something for Hellenic civilization. The venture into Syracuse would alone be sufficient evidence that Plato's political interests were not merely academic."[1]

While there is ample historical evidence concerning Plato's sincere desire to realize the Kallipolis, including his travels to Syracuse, the establishment of the Academy and the political engagement of its students all over Hellas, there is also a definite political message in the early and middle dialogues. In fact, there is a quite deliberate plan for the eventual establishment of the Kallipolis. As we have already seen (pp. 61-63 above), Plato in identifying the disorders that plagued his time, attempts through the eristic character of the Socratic elenchus (early dialectic) to destroy the inferior and unscientific practices that have caused the ruin of his society. The Republic's Kallipolis is his stated therapy; and dialectical thought and activity is the vehicle of his therapy (pp. 73-77 above). Let us thus, now examine with a closer look the relationship between the Kallipolis and dialectic.

The principle upon which Plato builds the Kallipolis (beautiful, or ideal, or best city) is based on the natural differences between human beings (370b):

> ... each one of us is born somewhat different from the others, one more apt for one task, one for another. Don't you think so?
> -- I do.
>
> Further, does a man do better if he practices many crafts, or if, being one man he restricts himself to one craft? --When he restricts himself to one.
>
> Both production and quality are improved in each case, and easier, if each man does one thing, which is congenial to him, does it at the right time, and is free of other pursuits. -- Most certainly.[2]

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[1] Morrow, trans., pp. 122-3.

[2] Grube, trans., p. 10.

For Plato this element is fundamental, since it is natural for the Ruler to govern if he is educated to be specialized in his field. Proper leadership is not to be found among merchants or shoemakers. These men have skills, but not the skills which will render them good rulers. His proposal is the reverse of Periclean democracy where versatility is stressed. Apparently, he was attempting two improvements over previous political systems. First, there is an efficiency of specialization and second, he stresses the natural differences between humans. Plato's principle is thus found in nature (physis) and is cultivated through education and experience.

Henceforth, the main purpose of Plato in the Republic is "to construct a state in which the true philosopher should be the guiding influence, and not despised as useless or feared as dangerous."[1] As Professor T. A. Sinclair points out, Plato was in fact attempting to originate an ideal polis where rule was to "be exercised for the benefit not of the ruler but the ruled, [where] money power and political power should be divorced, [where] holding office in the state should be unattractive and unprofitable."[2] Plato, however, understands that his ideal society needs rulers who are not to be found among the citizens of the existing polis. Therefore, he proposes an educational programme that will solve the problem. This educational plan which reveals the method for the selection of the philosopher-Rulers, also reveals the structure of his political theory. In short, the Republic itself is built with the method of dialectic.

The knowledge required by the Rulers to govern effectively is gathered through a constant progression. The dialectical method -- expounded in the Similes of the Sun, Line and Cave -- is a logical procedure of reasoning

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[1] Sinclair, Greek Political Thought, p. 145.

[2] Ibid., p. 144.

starting from a world of mere opinion which is shown to be subjective and irresponsible, and ending in the realm of the absolute and unchanging. Sometimes, however, the upward path is checked as there is a descent to corroborate the findings. Accordingly, hypotheses were proposed which were tested in the realm of forms or ideas (510c); to be rejected or modified; to be improved and finalized in order to reach the final destination of ultimate reality (The Idea of the Good). In other words, Plato's method of dialectic in the Republic is

> ... the ideal method, the upward path of knowledge superseding the hypothetical method of mathematics.... Invariably it included the search of reality (ousia, that is, substance or essence), that which abides or remains the same when other characteristics of an object come into existence and pass away. The advancement of knowledge is, therefore, dialectic.[1]

Dialectic is the highest study in Plato's educational curriculum for perfecting the philosopher-Ruler, and is aimed at attaining the Idea of the Good, the highest form of human awareness. There is a notion of therapy in Plato's political thought in the Republic, and the behaviour (because of his education) of the philosopher-Ruler is a crucial key to this notion.[2] Plato attempted to control the disorders of his time through the implementation of his basic belief that the rulers and true philosophers are one and the same (Republic 473d, Epistle VII 326a). In this sense, the Republic is a therapeutic planned social change which attempts to remedy the disorders of fourth century Athens. This therapy is dialectical in theory and application. It not only occurs in the realm of ideas, but can also influence in the manner of a blueprint constitution, the actual structure of the polis. In other words, Plato argues that government is a science (dialectical

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[1] Sahakian, p. 147.

[2] See Lee, trans., pp. 48-50.

reasoning and understanding) and science should be left to the hands of experts (philosopher-Rulers educated in a dialectical manner).

Dialectic, then, has two aspects: a methodological-epistemological, and an ontological. It is a Theory of Knowledge (the ascent on the Line and Cave), an attempt to explain how to know; indeed, how we are to know the Agathon (Good). But it is also a Theory of Reality that gives a fundamentally true account of the world: the real world of people, poleis and politics, that requires statesmen to dispense this acquired knowledge of the Agathon. In short, "the truth sought by dialectic is not a truth about nature or about the way men do in fact live; it is rather, a vision of the way men should live."[1] A vision, I might add, with serious practical applications; or at least that was what Plato himself believed.

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[1] Gouldner, p. 266.

CONCLUSION

> It is significant that Zeno is known to have criticized Plato's Republic, because it is not the City of Zeus. Plato, it is true, has his scheme for the production of the perfect man, deduced from the same Socratic principles, combined with his own conception of all that knowledge or wisdom implies. But he does not say: First make every individual perfect. And then you will need no laws or civic institutions. He is too much bent upon the reform of Greek society to be ready to postpone it to the millennium. So he turns to the other possible course: taking human nature as it is, and making the best of it. Plato's commonwealth is not the city of Zeus or the Kingdom of Heaven. It is a reformed Greek city-state, surrounded by other city-states and by the outer world of barbarians, against which it may have to hold its own. Hence he does not contemplate the abolition of war, which figures in all modern Utopias. The problem he proposes for solution is: What are the least changes to be made in the highest existing form of society --the Greek city-state -- which will put an end to intestine strife and faction, and harmonize the competing desires of human nature in a stable order?
>
> -- F. M. Cornford[1]

The principal aim of this thesis was to defend the righteousness, and practical possibility of the Platonic Kallipolis as described in the Republic. As such, two fundamental questions were asked: first, what were the motives behind Plato's attempt to reconstruct his society; and second, how does he propose to carry out this seemingly practical panacea for the disorders of fourth century Athens?

The Golden Age of Greek democracy (Pentecontaetia) had ended. During Plato's time democracy had degenerated into chaotic mob frenzy.[2] The Athenian Empire was at death's door, and its citizens were looking for solutions. Socrates, Isocrates, Xenophon, Plato, and Aristotle among others, asked questions, formulated answers and proposed remedies for their troubled age.[3] (The following passage, I believe, despite its age, almost a hundred

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[1] Cornford, The Unwritten Philosophy, pp. 60-61.

[2] See Wild, pp. 39-40.

[3] Indeed, this intellectual exercise saw the beginnings of Social and Political philosophy. Hegel claimed that philosophy begins only when a given society is past its glory -- when it is dying. "When philosophy paints its

years old, reflects the stark state of affairs in Athens better than anything else written in Platonic scholarship).

> That time was one, it should be remembered, for desperate remedies. ... For Plato's lot was cast in the days of the political collapse of Athens. It is possible that we may exaggerate too much the consciousness of the Athenians in the early half of the fourth century, of the downfall which had already overtaken their city, and the long and slow decline of life and freedom which lay before her. But after Sicily and Aegospotamoi, after the Four Hundred, the Thirty, and the Ten, when half the friends of his youth had found death and swift in agony of the Great Harbour or the crimson eddies of the Assinarus, or slow and lingering in the stone quarries of Syracuse, and half of those that still remained had been made the victim of brutal spite and judicial murder, when justice seemed to have fled the earth, Plato himself, and many with him, must have felt that the times were out of joint, and that society was only to be rehabilitated by an entire reconstitution, by heroic treatment, and divine good fortune.[1]

It has been said that out of a time of crisis and desperation, works of brilliance arise. This is very much the case with the Republic. Plato was not content with simplistic explanations. For example, Isocrates who was also worried with the ever increasing contrast between rich and poor, proposed that welfare handouts from one class to the other would solve the problem.[2] On the other hand, Plato's theory of government -- "the Royal Art," is a systematic theory that attempts to demonstrate the effective results of a carefully planned philosophical inquiry. Thus a Good or Ideal society can be planned to be realized when the polis is divided into three functional classes of Rulers, Protectors and Producers, which will properly divide the national wealth and create a climate of true general welfare

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grey in grey, then has a shape of life grown old. By philosophy's grey in grey it cannot be rejuvenated but only understood. The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk." Hegel's Philosophy of Right, trans. by T. M. Knox (New York: Oxford U. P., 1967), p. 13.

[1] T. Herbert Warren, The Republic of Plato (London: Macmillan, 1888), pp. XXI-XXXI.

[2] See Sinclair, Greek Political Thought, p. 118.

that will end class conflict once and for all (Republic 434e). In turn, the human psyche has three basic elements -- Reason, Spirit and Appetite -- that correspond with those of the Kallipolis. Reason (Wisdom) is at the head of this tripartite stratification, just as the Rulers (or Ruler) govern for the benefit of the whole commonwealth. The faculty of reason being "man's unique capacity to deliberate, to make and evaluate judgments and to achieve knowledge"[1] (unlike the temporary and unscientific reform of charity proposed by Isocrates), would provide the impetus for an ideal State -- a Kallipolis. Through the faculty of Reason, a Ruler proceeds in the difficult journey of becoming truly wise by comprehending the Idea of the Good. In this pursuit the study of dialectic must be mastered, since it provides infallible knowledge in the gathering and dispensing of ultimate enlightment, or justice over the affairs of the Kallipolis. The Kallipolis is, then, the pursuit of the affairs of the other two. Moreover, the co-operation of each class would produce an efficient and harmonious commonwealth (433a-434c). Plato thus defines justice as "the tending of your own business (433b)" -- that is, being competent within the limits of your responsibilities.

> In its political application this definition means that a just city [Kallipolis] is, first, an aristocracy, that is to say a government of those best fitted and most competent to govern by having gained through the insight of dialectic the vision of the agathon , and second, a thoroughly articulated community in which no one is allowed or, indeed, even wishes, to step out of his properly assigned place. ... What gives aptness and force to justice as "doing one's own business" is that so understood it becomes the excellence of excellences in a world under the rule of God. For that the Good rules can only mean that in its light each being is both good in itself and good as a part of the whole. But that is precisely what justice accomplishes in our working world, which is a reflection of the realm of

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[1] Milton K. Munitz, Ways of Philosophy (New York: Macmillan, 1979), p. 76.

being: To be just according to Socrates is to be both good on one's own and good for others.[1]

Hence Plato rejected the democratic process in favour of an intellectual elitism. His theory was formulated as a response to a political climate that has been neatly stated by T. H. Huxley in the following words: "A man's worst difficulties begin when he is able to do as he likes."[2] Plato wholeheartedly believed (in the Republic at least) that political arete could be achieved only through moral self-examination, and that political leadership had to be made contingent on a most rigorous intellectual, ethical, and moral training. Nowadays, however, such a rigidly stratified society is described as an "ideal bedlam" and "egregious nonsense," and its author as a "fastidious Athenian aristocrat."[3] Plato's modern enemies are too happy and too eager to label him as a totalitarian racialist, because of his "lifelong vendetta against democracy."[4] And yet, is it not surprising that such a negative notion of Plato would completely elude the attention of Cicero, Clement and Augustine, only to be discovered in this century? Seeking to find parallel concepts of modern politics in ancient texts (like for example the Nazi and Platonic idea of the organic architectonic of the state), is a totally unhistoric approach. Again, removing the thought of Plato from his age, to analyze it in the framework of another society, would lead to a complete misunderstanding of his whole thought.

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[1] Eva T. H. Brann, "Introduction," in The Republic of Plato, R. Larson, trans. (Arlington Heights, Illinois: AHM Publishing Corporation, 1979), pp. XLIV-XLV. See also Vlastos, "The Theory of Social Justice," pp. 26-35; R. Barrow, Plato, Utilitarianism and Education (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 27.

[2] Cited by E. R. Dodds, The Greeks and the Irrational (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951). p. 236.

[3] I. F. Stone, "Plato's Ideal Bedlam" Harper's, vol 262, January 1981, p. 66.

[4] Ibid.

The Kallipolis was Plato's answer to the following question: "What is more preferable: Freedom or order." Plato, the political reformer, who rejected a promising political career in his native Athens because of the incompetence and the corruption of the political parties and their leaders, established the Academy to expose the fallibility of the prevailing governments, and to contemplate a new political order that would have ended the ills of his world. It is, moreover, quite evident from his biography that he expected to implement the findings of the Academy in the realm of existing politics. As Mulford Q. Sibley, the author of one of the better histories of political theory, has written:

> [Plato] hoped that the discoveries of the Academy would provide the knowledge without which, he was convinced, no righteous state could be established.... In fact, Plato was to be far more directly involved in practical politics than Aristotle was to be, despite the latter's subsequent reputation as a more "practical" of the two.[1]

In this sense, the implementation of the Kallipolis was Plato's most important concern from the death of Socrates onwards. The eristic spirit of the early dialogues attempted to destroy existing inferior ideas, by paving the road for the Republic to construct an ideal-type society. Indeed, for four decades (386 to about 348) the Kallipolis was examined from every angle in the groves of the Academy.[2] Apparently, in these examinations certain defects in the construction of the Kallipolis were discovered. To his credit, Plato did not supress these findings. Having the "intellectual

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[1] M. Q. Sibley, Political Ideas and Ideologies: A History of Political Thought (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 62.

[2] "During the years between the Republic and the Laws, his students in the Academy were engaging in both empirical and nonempirical investigations and it would have been astonishing had their conclusions not affected the outlook of the man who was so open to new insights." Sibley, Political Ideas and Ideologies, p. 63.

honesty"[1] to admit the mistaken assumptions of his previous theory, just before his death, he wrote the Laws to set the record straight. In other words, Plato in the Republic "seeks to suggest the outlines of an ideally righteous polity; in the Laws, he retains the essential features of the ideal typical picture but seeks to show the degree to which it might be implemented in light of the limitations and recalcitrancies of collective experience."[2] The Magnesia, therefore, becomes Plato's final word in politics.[3] But it is clearly a "second best" type of government to be striven after (Laws 739a). Essentially, Plato's belief that knowledge through rational insight can render a philosopher-Ruler fit to govern, is replaced with a mixed constitution where law is supreme to ruler and subject alike. However, despite this apparent change of heart, Plato never abandoned the Kallipolis' basic theory. It is true, that laws are of utmost importance; for without laws men "will be indistinguishable from wild animals of the outmost savagery" (Laws 374e)[4]; and yet, Plato (in the same breath) makes the following statement (875c-d):

> If ever by the grace of God some natural genius were born, and had the chance to assume such power, he would have no need for laws to control him. Knowledge is unsurpassed by any law or regulation; reason, if it is genuine and really enjoys its natural freedom, should have universal power; it is not right that it should be under the control of anything else, as though it were some sort of slave. But as it is, such a character is nowhere to be found.... That is why we need to choose the second alternative, law and regulation...[5]

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[1] Vlastos, "The Theory of Social Justice," p. 35.

[2] Sibley, Political Ideas and Ideologies, p. 63.

[3] Here I follow the interpretation of Sabine and Thorson, pp. 71-80.

[4] Plato, The Laws, trans. by T. J. Saunders (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1975), p. 394.

[5] Ibid., p. 395, italics added.

At this point I can do no better than quote Professor Sabine's penetrating analysis.

> To end, therefore, Plato was convinced that in a truly ideal state [Kallipolis] the rule of pure reason, embodied in a philosopher-king and unhampered by law or custom, ought to prevail.... The state ruled by law was always a concession to the frailty of human nature and never something which he was willing to accept as having a right to stand on a parity with the ideal. Still, if the knowledge necessary to make the philosopher-king is unattainable, then Plato is clear that the common moral consciousness is right in believing that a government according to law is better than a government by men, rulers being what they are.[1]

It thus appears that Plato wrote the Laws because of his inability to mould to his exacting standards the ideal philosopher-Ruler during his lifetime. Indeed, his failure in Syracuse was striking. The Magnesia being a more practical proposal than the Kallipolis is geared for immediate implementation. On the other hand, however, Plato does not utterly abandon the possibility that some time in the future a ruler with such wisdom may surface. Marcus Aurelius, Julian the Apostate and John III Valatzes[2] are some rulers that come close to Plato's Ideal. The hope that some day the Kallipolis might be realized, never left Plato's mind.[3]

A final note. There has always been a unique relationship between Plato and his commentators. Because of his great literary powers, one never stops discovering something new with every reading: previously hidden truths become self-evident at once, only to be modified or even rejected in subsequent studies. Indeed, an examination of Plato often results in an examination of the commentators inner beliefs. Thus one might say that there

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[1] Sabine and Thorson, p. 78.

[2] See Sir Ernest Barker, Social and Political Thought in Byzantium (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), pp. 159-161.

[3] "When we realize that the Republic does not disclose the "limits of politics" but represents a truly ideal political order, then we shall understand Plato's intentions more adequately." Hall "Limits of Politics," pp. 310-311.

are as many interpretations of Plato as there are interpreters. Professor Guthrie has captured the challenge and fascination of studying Plato beautifully.

> A Greek commentator tells that when near his death he dreamed he had turned into a great bird. Men were trying to catch him, but flying from tree to tree he mocked all their efforts. His friend Simmias interpreted this to mean that all men would try to grasp Plato's meaning but none would succeed. Each would explain him in his own way, whether theologian, scientist or anything else. This was because (unlike some philosophers, one may add) the beauty of his style made him accessible to all, from whatever standpoint they approached him. The prophecy has come true. Everyone has his own Plato.[1]

[1] W. K. C. Guthrie, "Plato," Paideia: Special Plato Issue, vol. V, 1976, p. 10.

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